A NATION TRAINED IN ARMS OR A MILITIA?

By Lieutenant-General
BARON VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

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DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD-WAR

BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

Deputy Chief of the Imperial German General Staff.

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A NATION TRAINED IN ARMS OR A MILITIA?

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LESSONS IN WAR FROM THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

BY

Lieutenant-General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven

AUTHOR OF "DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD-WAR"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. E. CALLWELL K.C.B.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

HERACLITUS' description of war as the begetter of all things is equally true at the present day. It cannot be otherwise. Such a World-War as the present, quite apart from its other effects, must produce a very marked quickening of the intellectual activities. It is a result of the World-War that the question discussed in the following pages comes up for discussion once again, and hence it has seemed advisable to examine it thoroughly and impartially. In doing so, all those questions of purely military politics which the future must bring with it will be disregarded, even if the author does not disguise the conviction to which his study of history and his long experience have brought him. The unprejudiced reader will admit that not only the words of Heraclitus, but also that saying of Ben Aqiba constantly repeated by Gutzkow—" There is nothing new under the sun "—are equally true to-day.

This work is a sequel to the recently published volume, *Deductions from the World-War*, with which it exhibits many points of connection. To a certain extent it is an amplification of that work, in so far as it deals with the organisation of an efficient national army.

INTRODUCTION

THIS little volume, the work of a soldier whose *Deductions from the World-War* has recently attracted much attention and whose views are expressed with a moderation that is refreshing in a representative of Prussian militarism, should appeal to all in this country who recognise the imperative necessity of deciding betimes upon a national defence policy that will meet the strategical requirements of the British Empire in years to come. The purpose of the author is to show that a militia organisation—a military system under which the land forces of the State are composed mainly or entirely of troops who only spend short periods in the ranks in peace time—cannot be relied on to safeguard the realm in face of the jealousies, nor to withstand the attacks, of neighbours and rivals. He has the subject that he is dealing with at his fingers' ends. His examples culled from history are happily chosen and are most illuminating. His account of the development of the German

military machine of to-day, concise as it is, is likely to contain much information that will be new to most readers in the United Kingdom. His deductions from the World War are apposite, and are convincing on the whole. His arguments are well balanced, they only occasionally take the form of special pleading, and he can fairly claim that he proves his case.

At the same time, we are not bound to agree absolutely with all that he writes, nor are we compelled to accept the whole of his facts quite at their face value. It may be worth while, indeed, before proceeding further to indicate one or two passages that appear to invite criticism. In treating of the present war, for instance, he attributes German successes entirely to training, organisation and morale, and he leaves out of account the enormous advantages that his country possessed in the early days, as a result of its having at command the vast stores of war material which had been got together in the years preceding the outbreak of hostilities in anticipation of the coming struggle. In speaking of the Russian shortcomings, again, he ignores the harrowing lack of munitions from which the Tsar's forces suffered in 1915, and which was the cause

of their discomfiture far more than any backwardness in the personnel. We cannot reasonably complain at the assumption on the part of a Prussian general that the French infantry in 1914 were not a match in respect to efficiency for their antagonists; but we need not admit it. In his reference to the American War of Independence the author also seems to fall into error. He is justified in contending that their espousal of the cause of the colonists by the French decided the issue; but he puts the result down to the help afforded by the small land force which was dispatched by Louis XVI across the Atlantic. It was the intervention of Admiral De Grasse and his coadjutors that compelled this country to acquiesce in the United States separating themselves from the British Isles. "Before quitting that struggle for independence," writes Mahan, "it must again be affirmed that its successful ending, at least at so early a date, was due to control of the sea—to sea power in the hands of the French, and its improper distribution by the English authorities." [1]

General von Freytag-Loringhoven disposes very effectively of the myth that the irregular levies got together by the Republican

[1] *Influence of Sea Power upon History.*

Government after the French Revolution proved themselves to be efficient troops in face of the enemy. The achievements of these tumultuary forces were grossly exaggerated at the time, and the delusion has been fostered ever since by writers who have not been fully conversant with the facts. Misconceptions regarding what the *sans-culotte* legions accomplished served to popularise the militia idea in most countries for years afterwards, and nowhere indeed did these doctrines find greater favour than in Prussia itself during the years immediately following the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The truth, however, is that such successes as these improvised legions could place to their credit were due almost entirely to the fact that the armies with which they were confronted represented the fighting forces of a coalition, and one which suffered in exceptional degree from the drawbacks inherent in coalitions. The Republican soldiery improved as the years passed, because they gained war experience in a succession of campaigns. And so it came about that when Napoleon came upon the scene, military organisations, which in 1793 and 1794 had often partaken of many of the characteristics of an undisciplined rabble, had de-

veloped into material which a great administrator was able to transform into a mighty engine of war, and which a master of the military art was to turn to most brilliant account in the field.

The prolonged succession of struggles in which France engaged between 1792 and the year of Waterloo, affords incontrovertible evidence of the immeasurable superiority of trained over partially trained troops. That at different junctures the Vendeans, the Tyrolese under Andreas Hofer, and the Spanish guerillas of Peninsular days, gave regular troops of the highest class considerable trouble, cannot be disputed. But, as is so well shown in this little volume, those irregular warriors were never able to achieve more than ephemeral triumphs, and when they met with reverse the reverse spelt rout and disaster. The Prussian army, largely extemporised, won much distinction in the War of Liberation; but, as recorded in these pages, the annals of the contest provide many examples to show that the troops could not be depended upon to stand a heavy strain. Military forces of the militia class are incapable of following up victory, and they are apt to disintegrate and to evaporate in the hour of defeat. The case of Bull Run, to

which General von Freytag alludes when touching upon the War of Secession, is a particularly striking illustration of this. One army collapsed and fled because a comparatively insignificant hostile contingent unexpectedly appeared on its flank during the combat, the other army was totally unable to profit by one of the most sweeping tactical successes ever achieved on a battlefield.

The most interesting passages in the very informative three chapters which the author devotes to an analysis of the gradual development of Prussia's military forces from the date of the French Revolution down to 1859, are perhaps those that tell of the almost insuperable obstacles which the military authorities had to overcome when creating the army that was to conquer in the campaigns of 1864, of 1866 and of 1870–71. Their difficulties were by no means confined to problems such as arise in all countries in connection with providing the necessary funds for defence purposes. The soldiers were also confronted by a public opinion that was averse to the principle of standing armies, that was opposed to any system under which a considerable proportion of the young manhood of the country should be called

upon to remain more than a very few months with the colours, and that was largely guided by very mistaken notions as to what a militia is capable of when the enemy is in the gate. Consideration of economy can never be lightly dismissed. The economic drain which a State suffers when large portions of its citizens are employed on such an unremunerative occupation as soldiering in peace time, may justly be a subject of concern to the community. But the disseminators of a propaganda advocating partial training for troops as fulfilling requirements for serious war, constitute a national danger.

We have had our experience of this within the United Kingdom. During, and after, the South African War the opponents of effective military training were particularly busy. Because certain improvised corps, composed of exceptionally good fighting material and drawn from the "men who could shoot and ride," acquitted themselves to admiration against the Boer guerillas, writers and public men who were destitute of techincal knowledge and were totally unacquainted with the inner history of the conduct of war, decried the regular army system and clamoured for virtually untrained troops. Had they had their way, such military

contingents as we might have got across the Channel in August 1914 assuredly would not have stayed the mighty German flood surging round the outer flank of the French hosts, there would have been no gap between Von Kluck and Von Buelow, and even if the Battle of the Marne had not then by good fortune proved a defeat for the Allies it never would have ended in a dramatic and comprehensive victory of incalculable value to the Entente cause.

The author acknowledges quite frankly that the German Reserve divisions proved a somewhat broken reed in the opening days of the World-War, although he commends the personnel for the martial spirit that was displayed. Only gradually, as he admits, were these new troops brought up to a standard of efficiency to be compared with that possessed as a matter of course by the old. Our experience has been the same during the great contest. Our New Army divisions were something of a disappointment when first they took the field. Composed as they were of splendid material and recruited in the early days entirely from genuine volunteers, a very high estimate of their capabilities was formed before they started for the front by their commanders and staffs—

soldiers, most of whom had purchased priceless experience under Sir J. French during the retreat from Mons and the subsequent strategical recovery, and whose opinion was therefore well worth having. But it was found that these improvised troops required to be broken very gradually even to the comparatively simple forms of sedentary warfare that prevailed in Flanders and Artois in 1915. That it did not pay to commit them to really trying enterprises for a time after their entry into the theatre of operations, was proved not only on the Western Front but also at the Dardanelles. The passage from a dispatch of Sir D. Haig's that is quoted on pp. 19–20, affirms the Field-Marshal's conviction that he must allow his lately-joined divisions as long a term as possible to learn their work in presence of the enemy, before trying them in the fire of a great offensive.

But General von Freytag, it may be observed, rather misses what is an all-important point when he is dealing with the question of the gradual transformation of recently-organised troops into a seasoned and trustworthy force during the progress of a campaign. The metamorphosis can only be accomplished with time. Novel

units, or a callow soldiery of the militia type mobilised in some great national emergency, only rise to the heights that make them fit to cope with fully trained forces, after a protracted period of preparation for the ordeal. How long the process will take, depends upon a variety of circumstances—upon the condition under which the operations are being conducted, upon the respective activities of the embattled armies, upon the raw material of which the new troops are composed, and so forth. But it is bound to be a matter of many months—and it may be a matter of years.

Now, if one comes to think of it, the conditions of the World War have to a quite unusual degree befriended such improvised formations as the belligerents have mustered for the fray. At the date of writing (June 1918), the contest has already lasted very nearly four years. Time, therefore, has unquestionably not been lacking to succour immature units as these have moulded themselves into shape for the great adventure. They consequently have not been put to the test and been found wholly wanting as Gambetta's levies were in the winter of 1870–71. Moreover, in what has throughout represented the decisive theatre of war

—the Western Front—the fighting partook of a stagnant, trench-warfare character just during those very months when the freshly-created contingents on both sides were least to be depended upon. But it does not follow that what has occurred between 1914 and 1918 stands for a precedent standardising what we have to expect in future struggles. Conflicts to come may be of short duration. They may be signalised by constantly fluctuating strategical situations. In place of lines of entrenchments of vast extent behind which opposing hosts stand on guard, we may see a succession of kaleidoscopic combinations of war executed by mobile, nomadic swarms of men.

The contests of 1859, of 1886 and of 1870–71 were, each of them, brought to a speedy conclusion. The Russian army only took nine months to reach the gates of Constantinople in the days of Plevna and the Shipka Pass. One single winter campaign enabled the Balkan States, fighting in mountainous inhospitable regions, very deficient in communications and by no means well adapted for the delivery of lightning strokes, to overwhelm the forces that the Ottoman Empire was able to place against them in the field. And so it may be in years to come. It may

be urged that the Russo-Japanese duel in the Far East lasted a full year and a half; but the conditions of that conflict were abnormal seeing that the troops of the Tsar were making war at the further end of a railway-line 4000 miles long. The duration of the War of Secession did nearly equal that of the World War to date; but the reason why the Federals required five campaigns to overcome the South, in spite of their possessing far greater resources and of their commanding the sea, was that both sides depended, to start with, upon hastily-improvised armies, and that the victor's fighting forces remained for two years or more decidedly the more irregular of the two. Those two tremendous struggles hardly disprove the rule that international contests since the introduction of railways and modern armament have not generally been prolonged.

Does that rule apply to affrays where whole nations gather in the field, as the Confederates did in the War of Secession and as the Boers did in the South African War? Even supposing that it does not, even supposing that struggles are bound to be protracted where virtually the entire manhood of one or both of the belligerent sides takes up arms, there is always this

important point to be remembered. Granted that such conflicts are likely to extend over many months and even possibly over many years, substantial contingents of thoroughly trained and highly disciplined warriors must always prove a priceless asset to the side that possesses them at the outset. That this is the fact is admirably illustrated by the course of the Homeric, long-drawn-out trial of strength that is now in progress. Had the Franco-British regular armies which assembled on the Western Front in August 1914 been stronger numerically by, let us say, 30 per cent. the enemy would have been brought up short when half-way through Belgium—probably about the line of the Meuse and of Namur-Antwerp; the operations ever since would have swayed to and fro across that line; the strategical situation during the period when the British Empire was slowly transforming itself into a great confederacy of military nations would have been incomparably more favourable for the Entente; the position of affairs to-day, with Russia eclipsed, would have been a far less anxious one for us than it actually is.

The author writes as a soldier, expressing views on questions which only soldiers generally examine into in all their details

and concerning which most soldiers are in agreement. Although a protagonist of militarism as it is understood and is practised in Prussia, he puts the case for the trained army and against the militia system temperately, neither exaggerating the merits of the one nor unduly disparaging what can be produced under the other. He quotes Treitschke and Clausewitz, but the passages chosen do not vaunt domination established by force over neighbouring States and races as the highest ideal of statesmanship. As in his previous work, he pays a tribute to what Lord Kitchener achieved in fashioning a formidable and martial nation in arms out of the essentially non-military population of Great Britain, which cannot fail to propitiate readers in this country. His chivalrous references to the valour of the French regular troops in their terrible year, 1870, and to the grit and patriotism displayed by a people hereditarily hostile to Germany in answer to Gambetta's trumpet call, strike a particularly pleasant note. But dreamers of dreams that conjure up Leagues of Peace will not find much more to encourage them in this little volume than was to be derived from its predecessor, *Deductions from the World-War*.

C. E. C.

June, 1918.

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A NATION TRAINED IN ARMS OR A MILITIA?

CHAPTER I

IN THE WORLD-WAR

THE World-War has witnessed a great many new formations of troops on both sides. The heavy losses suffered by the existing army-units made it necessary to reduce considerably the time allowed for training the reserves. As a temporary measure, it was necessary to send them against the enemy after a very brief course of instruction. By degrees, all those capable of bearing arms were called upon. The armies and the home-country were blended into one whole. The *arrière-ban* [1] of ancient times, vastly extended in scope, was revived once again.

[1] The summons of the sovereign of the early feudal state to all freemen calling them to the field with their vassals, equipment, and three months' provisions.—*Translator.*

The Germans

German militarism, which our enemies first decried and then by degrees themselves adopted, did not, prior to the World-War, embrace our whole nation, since universal military service, in its literal sense, in reality existed only in law. If, however, the essence of militarism is to be sought in the military organisation of the nation, then indeed it had been established among us for the last hundred years. The rigorous discipline with which it was accompanied was transferred automatically to numerous branches of industry, and proved beneficial to their work. Compulsory education also contributed to this result. There is some truth in the saying that the Prussian schoolmaster won the Battle of Königgrätz. The immense improvement since that date in the education of the whole German people has also borne fruit in the World-War. "It was only," writes Stegemann,[1] "the spirit of the army and the complete devotion of the whole nation to the service of the Fatherland which enabled Germany to enter upon such a war, and to engage in it so energetically and organise it so thoroughly that it became the

[1] *Geschichte des Krieges*, I. 100.

expression of the full and arduous life, the purposeful activity, of the whole people, and raised the nation above itself."

A Prussian General, commenting on the saying that the Prussian schoolmaster won Königgrätz, once said that the name of this schoolmaster was Clausewitz. "The seed which he sowed bore rich fruit on the battle-fields of 1866 and 1870–71. The superiority of our leadership, which was there revealed, was very largely the result of the work *On War*, which has been a source of instruction to a whole line of distinguished soldiers. And Moltke's saying, that 'Strategy is a system of accommodations, the translation of knowledge into practical life' is quite in harmony with the teaching of Clausewitz. Moltke's intellectual development corresponded closely with that of Clausewitz, until the Field-Marshal began to outstrip his instructor. . . . A great deal of his teaching has been embodied in our field service regulations." [1] For, throughout, the latter set intelligence above mere form, and thus secured that adaptability requisite for coping with the various new problems which confronted us in the World-War.

[1] Count Schlieffen. Introduction to the 5th edition of *Vom Kriege*. Berlin, 1905.

The training of the General Staff in the German Army was thoroughly practical; it was based upon a close association with the troops. The training of the latter culminated in manœuvres organised on a warlike scale. The rigorous demands which these manœuvres made upon the men have bred up that hard fighting race which has stood the test of the World-War. It was by means of these large-scale manœuvres that the army was educated for a war of movement, and it is the war of movement which, wherever we have been able to resort to it, has procured us the greatest successes. The army did not rest on its laurels of 1870–71, but with unremitting industry pursued its work year in year out. It was in the army that the wish expressed by Treitschke in respect of the defeat of the year 1806—that this defeat should be "as ineffaceable from the memory of all future generations as a personal injury, an admonition upon all to vigilance, humility and loyalty" [1]—found its fulfilment. The achievements of our army in the World-War were the fruit of the spirit of the German people; but they were only rendered possible by means of the previous peace-training under the super-

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, I.

intendence of the All-Highest War Lord, a training continued year by year and extending from the careful drilling of the individual soldier to the instruction of the large units. Only upon the basis of such a training was it possible to increase the army during the war in accordance with the demands of the world-conflict.

The first new formations did not prove equal to the test. It became necessary to send to the Front, where they were, moreover, exposed to peculiarly difficult conditions, the new Reserve Corps, the formation of which had been decreed in the middle of August 1914. Hardly ever have troops—or, at any rate, the bulk of them—exhibited such high qualities of spirit and will as did these new regiments, but three-fourths of them were war-volunteers, enlisted—except for a certain number of older men—from the youth of all classes, including a large number of graduates from the universities. Moreover, the few men among these troops who had already served in the army were elder members of the Landwehr and the Landsturm. Subsequently, the firmness of the new formations was enhanced, wherever possible, by including in them a considerable proportion of men possessing actual experience

of war. The new corps who were put into the line at the Yser in the autumn of 1914 lacked, above all, experienced officers and non-commissioned officers. The reserve battalions were no longer able to furnish the latter in sufficient numbers. There had been heavy losses among the officers of the active army and the younger reserve officers during the first battles; the few who were left had to remain at their posts before the enemy. Hence it became necessary to have recourse to the older half-pay officers and reserve officers, who had long since abandoned any form of military exercise, and whose physical efficiency was in the majority of cases no longer up to the mark. Hence that confident leadership in battle, which is so particularly necessary in the case of young troops, was not fully ensured. Only gradually, in the course of the war, after the improvement of their officers' corps, were these new troops brought to the level of the old corps.

The reserve officers, in the course of the war, to a large extent stepped into the place of their comrades of the active army, and they proved completely equal to the test. A great deal had already been done before the war to train our reserve officers, and

during the war this training has been continued by means of courses of instruction held behind the Front. The long war has completely transformed them into professional soldiers. The sphere in which they showed to best advantage was in the leadership of the lower units—the companies, and—to a certain extent also—the battalions.

The control of military instruction was, even during the war, entrusted to the older officers of the active army. For this work, and also for the leadership of the higher units, it was indispensable to employ men who had made the profession of arms their life-task. Generally speaking, the officers of the reserves and the Landwehr only acquitted themselves so valiantly because they were introduced into the solid framework of the officers' corps of the active army, which, even in peace time had been the vehicle for the transmission of the military spirit and traditions through the army.

The impossibility of building up in a short time an even moderately efficient officers' corps is very clearly revealed in an article in the New York *Army and Navy Journal* of September 15th, 1917. In it the writer comments on the fact that so many candidates

for the profession of officers fail to pursue their course of training to the end. The commandant of a drill school of instruction, in reply to an inquiry as to the reasons which led to this, declared that a very large number of the candidates are deficient in those qualities which are indispensable for one who is to fill the position of an officer. The candidates for the most part exhibit a general apathy from the outset. Many of them, moreover, are incapable of giving an order clearly and distinctly. Many, also, lack the faculty of forming a decision adapted to a given situation. Others cannot be brought to maintain, both on duty and off duty, the bearing and conduct of an officer and a gentleman. Finally, there is lacking in almost all the *sense of subordination*, and, as a consequence of this, many of them throw up the course, because they have taken offence at some rebuke from a superior officer. Equally with the officers of the reserves, many of our troops also have been to a certain extent transformed into professional soldiers. The excitement of danger has spurred them on. Aviators, storm-troops, flame-thrower troops, mine-troops, have performed wonders; their courage has mounted to ever greater heights. The length

of the war to a certain extent cancelled the disadvantage due to the fact that a large number of the new levies could only be given a comparatively short course of training. Recruits, as well as the members of the Landsturm who had not experienced active service, when they were put into the line, were always posted to a unit which had already stood the test of war. Where this support was not present in sufficient strength, these new levies could not be described unreservedly as fully efficient soldiers. None the less, trench warfare almost always afforded the possibility of continuing the training of the new levies in recruit-dépôts behind the front, only the groundwork of their training being given them at home. The same system was employed in the allied Austro-Hungarian army. After two months' training in the home country, the recruits were put into draft-finding battalions with men who had recovered from their wounds, and these battalions were then subjected to a longer course of training behind the front before the men were distributed among the troops in the front lines. In Germany, our old sergeant-majors and warrant officers, many of whom, though they had retired from military service years ago, voluntarily

returned to it, rendered valuable service in connection with the home-training. Those sergeant-majors, through whose hands recruits were constantly passing during the World-War, those old officers who marched at the head of the reserve battalions, contributed generously to the German successes. Patiently, day after day, they performed their tasks in the Fatherland, although they were never to see the fruits of their arduous educational labours reach maturity in the face of the enemy.

The fact that, in the German national army, the qualities requisite for every task that had to be performed were present where they were needed testified to its excellent organisation and training. The work of a century now, at the hour of supreme danger, proved its worth. As a result of this work, moreover, the army constantly proved adequate to the new tasks which fell to its share, and, despite the very great demands upon the national strength, never sank to the level of a loose militia. Such would inevitably have been the fate of a national army which had been less well disciplined in time of peace. Such an army would not have been capable of defying for years the assault of an enemy superior in numbers, at

the same time preserving to the end the strength to attack whenever the opportunity arose, and to pursue a victorious and irresistible offensive across the mountains of the Roumanian frontier and the Alps. Yet much would have been easier, and the arduous struggle would have been shortened, if our peace-preparation had been still more comprehensive, above all, if, before the war, we had actually enlisted all those liable for service. The fact that we did not do this is the best refutation of the accusation made by our enemies that Germany deliberately provoked the war. It could not, moreover, be foreseen that the war would take on such vast proportions, and that technical science would develop to such an extent in the course of it. That it did so develop is a proof that the highest degree of preparedness in these matters is part of the full equipment for war of a nation. Only the human ramparts in the West and the East secured for us the time in which to bring our technical war-equipment to the highest level of efficiency. Every war engenders new developments in this sphere, every war brings surprises, but we ought to make it our endeavour to limit the possibility of such surprises as far as lies in our power.

The French

In contrast to ourselves, France had already in time of peace drawn upon her national strength to the utmost limits, and had considerably lowered her standard of military fitness. Hence it resulted that the total war-strength of the country, which comprised only thirty-nine and a half million inhabitants, was not only equal to that of the German Empire, with its close upon sixty-seven million inhabitants, but, at the beginning of the war, even exceeded it. Stegemann [1] considers that the estimate of the strength of the French army in August 1914 at one and a half million is, if anything, below the mark. The total fighting strength gradually accumulated by the French, he estimates at five and a half millions, in connection with which it has to be considered that France called up a considerable black army, numbering in all 700,000 men. The war-preparedness of the French army had been continually increased, with a view always to the *revanche*. In 1913 France reverted to the three-years' term of service, and called up the classes of two years simultaneously. By this means, the peace-

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, I. 85.

strengths of the corps were notably increased, an advantage at the beginning of the war which should not be under-estimated. According to Stegemann,[1] however, the same degree of preparedness for war did not extend throughout the whole army. In this respect, the territorial divisions left something to be desired, and "defects of organisation were already revealed at the calling up of the reserves."

As regards the efficiency of the army, the same writer pronounces the following judgment:[2] "The French army, which was intended for an offensive movement on a large scale, had, to be sure, after its augmentation in the course of the last few years, accepted the offensive theory in principle, but was, in fact, by its very nature, unprepared for far-reaching movements and encounters in unknown territory. It was much more adapted for the 'offensive defensive.' The latter affords the French opportunity for displaying their ingenuity in the erection of strong points of support, for winning small territorial gains by the independent action of the subordinate command, and for constantly renewing the moral and courage of the troops by dint of minor successes. Their

[1] *Ibidem*, I. 88. [2] *Ibidem*, I. 87.

lack of mobile heavy howitzers, such as we possessed from the outset, was partially made up for in the case of the French, by their extremely skilful use of their field-artillery. If they were not equal to the Germans in a war of movement, they showed themselves from the outset masters in the art of rearguard tactics. As a result of the heightened self-confidence which was infused into their ranks after the Battle of the Marne, they became more and more worthy of respect as opponents, though they were more skilful in the technique than in the actual tactics of fighting. The close proximity of their sources of supplies, due to the fact that they were fighting in their own country, was very much in their favour, and enabled them to make full use of their abundant technical resources, in particular of their long-range heavy artillery. Since they had free access to the sea, they had at their disposal an almost unlimited supply of munitions."

Individually, the French infantry were not equal to the German. General Cherfils commented regretfully on this fact when he wrote:[1] "The German is a true soldier. Discipline has become part of his flesh and

[1] *Echo de Paris*, November 23rd, 1915.

blood. That is his greatest source of strength." The General extols that uniformity of training which penetrated into the lowest ranks of the German army. "The opponents of a long term of active military service and of thorough preparation in time of peace should consider the following facts: A militia army with an abridged term of training may perform heroic deeds, the regiments may exhibit a high standard of cohesion, but such an army will lose all its strength if circumstances compel it to break up its principal units and to blend these together." Although the whole French nation had passed through the school of arms, the steadiness and cohesion in the formations was, in contrast with ours, not so firm but that it was seriously impaired as a result of the numerous new formations and the continual bringing up of new levies.

The English

At the beginning of the war, England had at her disposition a field army of 160,000 men in the home-country and in the colonies, exclusive of India, as well as reserve and garrison troops to the number of 127,000 men. It had been arranged that, under the protection of the force, the insufficiently

trained territorial army, numbering 300,000 men, should complete their training in the space of six months. In India, the regular English troops numbered 77,000 men, and there was a native army of 214,000 men. By degrees, the English field-army was augmented by considerable fighting forces from the colonies—Canadians, Indians, New Zealanders and Australians. Nevertheless, the raising of the army to a force numbering millions was accomplished within the home-country itself. Lord Kitchener built up twelve divisions out of the six regular divisions existing before the war, and twenty-eight divisions out of the fourteen very imperfectly organised territorial divisions, thus doubling the army. These divisions were supplemented by the thirty so-called Kitchener divisions. By July 1915, the army had been increased by more than two million volunteers. Nevertheless, the growing need of men resulting from the unforeseen extension of the war made it necessary, in January 1916, to introduce universal military service.

A contemporary author writes :[1] "In the eyes of all those who have studied the

[1] Julian Grande, *Grossbritannien und sein Heer*. Zürich, 1917. Pp. 21–2.

history of England during the last three centuries, the introduction of universal military service will appear as something so outside the customary course of events as almost to possess the significance of a revolution. The English people had always exhibited a deep-rooted aversion, not only to military service, but also to the establishment and the maintenance of a large army. This aversion was not the fruit of any reflection. It is a deeply rooted sentiment, an expression of the English temper, a peculiarity of the national consciousness. The Englishman can only conceive independence in the form of personal freedom. In view of this, it is exceedingly noteworthy that such a revolution should have been accomplished so easily, and, in fact, by universal consent, in the space of barely eighteen months. That this was possible is due to the fact that the men, whose task it was to guide the nation through the tremendous vicissitudes in which Europe is plunged at present, had the good sense not to force the issue, but to allow events to develop to a logical conclusion. Consequently, the revolution came about as an integral part of the national development. It has been asserted that, at the beginning of the struggle,

Lord Kitchener was urged by some to introduce universal military service forthwith. He emphatically declined to do so, and he was right. At that time the English people, great as was the danger with which they were confronted, had formed no notion of its true extent, and had not reached any clear understanding of the task that had to be accomplished. Hence this nation, which clings so tenaciously to its comfort and its prejudices, would not have understood why, short of irresistible necessity, it should abandon a system which was in such complete harmony with its traditions and so excellently suited to its habits. Kitchener preferred to allow the nation to come slowly to a realisation of the truth, in the meantime continually increasing the number of recruits, until it was obvious to every one how inadequate was a system which, with quite a few exceptions, had placed the whole nation upon a war-footing. The fact that, at the call of the government, over five million English came forward voluntarily for the defence of their country, before a single man had been compulsorily enlisted in the army, sheds imperishable glory on the name of Lord Kitchener and is a just source of pride to the English people."

In the matter of the training of the new troops, no less than in that of the constitutional innovations, England took her time. The long war of entrenchments afforded the possibility for this. First in the home-country, then behind the front in France, the newly-formed divisions were subjected to a thorough training, before they were put into the line. It was not until the spring of 1916 that the English were able to take over extensive sections of the front which had hitherto been held by the French, and even then they could not in all respects be classed as fully efficient fighting troops. The English Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, refers to this in his report to the Ministry of War on the 23rd of December, 1916 :[1] "The principle of an offensive campaign during the summer of 1916 had already been decided on by all the Allies. . . . Subject to the necessity of commencing operations before the summer was too far advanced, and with due regard to the general situation, I desired to postpone my attack as long as possible. The British armies were growing in numbers and the supply of munitions was steadily increasing. Moreover, a very large proportion of the

[1] *The Times*, December 30th, 1916.—*Translator.*

officers and men under my command were still far from being fully trained, and the longer the attack could be deferred, the more efficient they would become. On the other hand, the Germans were continuing to press their attacks at Verdun, and both there and on the Italian front, where the Austrian offensive was gaining ground, it was evident that the strain might become too great to be borne unless timely action were taken to relieve it."

These words of the English Commander-in-Chief contain an indirect admission that the German supreme command was well-advised in anticipating the enemy by opening the attack on Verdun in the spring of 1916. The report contains, moreover, a confession of the inadequacy of the English troops in the summer of 1916, notwithstanding the long course of training which had been allotted to them. Even at this date, the English divisions could only cope with the simple tasks of trench warfare, when backed up by a considerable superiority in respect of heavy and siege artillery. The English army was by no means adapted for a war of movement. English officers who have been taken prisoner have themselves admitted this fact. Moreover, the higher

officers of the English army lacked that understanding which can only be acquired as the result of a long training from youth upwards and upon the basis of traditions such as existed in the German army. English prisoners have frequently complained of the inadequate military training of their officers. This deficiency is to a large extent responsible for the failure of the repeated attempts of the English to break through our lines, notwithstanding the stout and reckless courage with which these attempts were carried out. In every case, they resulted only in a more or less insignificant gain of territory, never in a decisive victory.

It is, in fact, impossible to build up an army adequate to all the demands of war in the course of the war itself. The English army of millions has furnished a proof of this. All the care that was bestowed upon it, all its valuable technical resources, all its unlimited supply of munitions, were powerless to alter this fact.

The Russians

In order to understand the conduct of the Russian national army in the World-War, it is necessary to take a brief survey of the past history of the Russian army.

After the Crimean War a complete departure was made from the form of training which had prevailed in the Russian army under Nicholas I. Formality and stiffness in the bearing of the individual soldier as well as of the unit as a whole was done away with entirely, as being out of harmony with the national character, though this change undoubtedly involved the sacrifice of some indispensable aids to discipline. It was believed that the inborn submissiveness of the Russian soldier rendered the rigid discipline of the drill-master entirely superfluous, and it was overlooked that this lowering of the requirements from the unit in respect of outward appearance and uniformity necessarily involved a serious relaxation of its inward cohesion, and that where there was no careful training of the individual soldier, the practice of even the simplest movements by the unit as a whole must take up so much time that the training for war would necessarily prove too short. The recruit was just as willing, but the old subordination disappeared more and more, and moreover could not be made up for by a lofty and instinctive sense of duty, as in the case of a nation of old civilisation. Finally, in the year 1874, with the introduction of

universal military service, the army acquired an entirely different character. In place of the old soldiers, with their long term of service, who looked upon their regiment as their home, we now find men who belonged to the service only for a few years.

The change from an army of professional soldiers to an army based upon the principle of universal military service, took place, of course, only by degrees, so that, when the Balkan War of 1877–78 broke out, universal military service had still not become fully effective. General Kuropatkin, the leader of the Russian army in the Manchurian campaign, in his Report on the Russo-Japanese War,[1] admits, in the course of his historical retrospect of the campaign, that those troops which had not already spent the winter of 1876–77 in a mobilised condition on the Roumanian frontier, but had only later been brought to war-strength, exhibited in certain cases a lack of firm cohesion. He writes : " This first war after the introduction of universal military service, even if it ended in a victory over the Turks, none the less proved how very far we were behind our western neighbours in respect of our arrangements for mobilisation and

[1] Part IV. *The Result of the War.* Warsaw, 1906.

concentration. . . . We were stronger in defence than in attack. . . . As in the Crimean War, we showed ourselves weak in power of manœuvre, and on several occasions, and especially at Plevna, were clumsy in the conduct of our offensive." Again in 1904, he declares that the tactical training of the army still left a very great deal to be desired; in fire tactics it was far behind the German army. Kuropatkin holds General Dragomirow largely to blame for the fact that the old notion that the bayonet was the supremely important weapon for deciding a contest, still held sway. Dragomirow went so far as to insist that the infantry advancing to attack ought not to lie down when halted. He might have recognised that the character of the Russian soldier renders impossible that individualistic training which modern warfare demands. His writings had a very great influence, because he ingratiated himself with the public by his manner of emphasising the moral factor. The ear of the Russian people was charmed by the repeated insistence upon the incomparable qualities of the Russian soldier and the irresistible strength of his bayonet; it was so beautiful and—so comfortable, for there was no exhortation to continued labours. That un-

ceasing labour which was carried on year in year out in the German army was unknown in Russia.

General Kuropatkin regrets not only the tactical inadequacy of the army entrusted to him; he also criticises its intrinsic worth in more than one respect, and the Russian troops engaged in the Manchurian campaign were, in fact, of very unequal value. In any case, the impression gained from General Kuropatkin's statements is that the army as a whole, even apart from the inferiority of its tactical training, was far from being a thoroughly trustworthy instrument of war. The judgment of the unfortunate general may, of course, have been influenced by the desire to exculpate himself by emphasising the blame attaching to his troops; on the other hand, there can be no more terrible experience for a commander in the field than to mistrust the value of his own troops. The blame for what happened in Manchuria ought not to be attributed solely to the Russian leadership. Even the best will was frequently powerless to accomplish anything with such troops as had to be dealt with. In the fourth section of his Report, Kuropatkin aims chiefly at expounding lessons for the future. He is a loyal son of Russia,

and he does not close his eyes to the many defects of his country. Before the Manchurian campaign, when he was Minister of War, he frequently, in opposition to the extravagant schemes of the Pan-Slav party, maintained that the first thing to be done was to consolidate and strengthen the internal organisation of the country. In contrast to the imperialists, he maintained that the present boundaries of the Russian Empire were sufficiently extensive, and he made no secret of his conviction that it would be a very long time before the Russian soldier would be an equal match for the German or the Austro-Hungarian. He recognises that universal military service has, from a moral point of view, improved the Russian soldiers in the mass, but he points out that, in view of the low standard of culture of the individual soldier, it is difficult to infuse into him that notion of military discipline, which distinguishes in such high degree the German soldier. He regrets that corporal punishment should have been done away with even in time of war, because the dread of corporal punishment is the only means of restraining bad elements in the army from offences against their superior officers. The events of the Revolution of

1917 have proved his views only too well justified.

The officers' corps of the Manchurian army left something to be desired in more than one respect. Kuropatkin, while he insists that there were many glorious exceptions, expresses his opinion of the Russian officer as follows: "Upon the whole it may be said that in all ranks there was a deficiency of men of strong soldierly character, men of iron nerve capable of sustaining a day of continued fighting without flagging. It is evident that neither our education nor our manner of life during the last forty to fifty years has been calculated to develop strong, independent characters. Otherwise, they would have been represented in the army in far greater numbers." After such an opinion from the Commander-in-Chief, the following description of the retreat from Moukden by a German observer [1] cannot be dismissed as an exaggeration: "Officers under the influence of alcohol made the most insulting comments on Russia's policy in regard to Eastern Asia, and in such loud tones that every one could hear them. I believe I am not saying too much if I attribute the chief

[1] Ullrich, *Die Feuerprobe der Russischen Armee im Kriege 1904–5.* Berlin, 1910. R. Eisenschmidt.

share of the blame for the complete dissolution of the army to the conduct of the officers, which in the majority of cases was beneath contempt." This judgment is of all the more value in view of the impartiality of its author, who could write on the 10th of March, 1905: "On this fateful day I have seen officers who have staked their lives in the attempt to maintain their authority, and I have also seen how readily the Russian soldier submits to an energetic personality."

Kuropatkin passes a far more favourable judgment on the officers of the General Staff than on the generals and staff officers. He accords full recognition to their sense of duty and honour and their faculty of endurance, and in the World-War they have for the most part proved themselves worthy of his praise. But the General is in agreement with the judgment of foreign officers when he says: "The general opinion in regard to the higher command was that, in spite of their excellent theoretical training and their unquestionably high moral qualities, the officers of the General Staff were estranged from the rest of the army." They exhibited none of that zealous co-operation with the latter which is such a striking and healthy

characteristic of the German General Staff officers.

Far too many of the conditions which at one time contributed to the efficiency of the Russian troops, ceased to exist after the middle of the nineteenth century; they could not, indeed, any longer exist. An important fact, moreover, was that the war in the Far East was thoroughly unpopular both with the officers and the men. They had no clear conception of what they were fighting for, and looked upon the war as something in the nature of an unsuccessful colonial enterprise. Hence the disaster to the Russian arms was not felt in any way as a disgrace. Kuropatkin repeatedly emphasises the fact that in this respect the Russians were far inferior to the Japanese, who were inspired by a lofty national ambition, and that an army which is based on the principle of universal military service must be supported by general public opinion. He writes: "In a collision between two nations, material weapons count for less than spiritual forces. Where the spirit of the nation and army is of higher worth, where there is revealed a more self-sacrificing devotion to the Fatherland, there is the greater likelihood of victory."

Such a likelihood of victory appeared on the outbreak of the World-War to lie on the side of the Russians, both in virtue of their huge numbers and of the undoubted popularity of the war, at any rate at the beginning; and that all the more, since the experiences gained during the Manchurian campaign had not been disregarded. In the ten years' interval between the Peace of Portsmouth and the outbreak of the World-War, much had been done to promote the war-preparedness of the Russian army. But though individual improvements were effected, it was impossible to infuse a new spirit into a national army of gigantic size within the space of ten years, more especially in view of the low standard of culture and the apathetic temperament of the Russian people. The excellent passive qualities of the Russian soldier—his patience, his capacity of resistance to weather conditions and the impressions of the conflict—were equally revealed in the World-War; and the huge Russian army was an obedient tool in the hands of its leaders when, instructed by the failure of their defensive tactics in Eastern Asia, they embarked on a reckless offensive. Only from a nation like the Russian could such an immense human sacrifice have been

exacted. Owing to its insensibility to losses and defeats, as well as to the moral effects of retreat, the Russian army maintained its cohesion even in the most difficult situations. Nevertheless, the unwieldy character of the Russian masses showed itself just as it had done in previous wars. In spite of the popular notion of the inexhaustible supply of the Russian reserves, the number of thoroughly trained men who could be sent to the Front grew less and less as time went on, so that the efficiency of the army steadily declined; although it cannot be denied that great pains were taken to profit by the experiences of the war, and that the Russian army still remained a redoubtable adversary. The achievements of the Russians in respect of organisation, both before and during the war, are very striking. Of course, in passing any judgment upon Russia, it ought not to be forgotten that months before the order was given for its actual mobilisation, the Russian army had been brought to a high level of preparedness. Only as a result of this fact was it enabled to overcome the difficulties consequent upon the vast extent of the empire. This is at once evident if we consider that a total of two million combatants, equipped with abundant and

excellent artillery, entered the field of battle in August 1914, that in the late autumn of the same year the Russian army was estimated at five million, and that the total number of men called under arms must have been not less than twelve million.[1] When we consider, on the other hand, that even this immense superiority of numbers proved incapable of crushing the German and Austro-Hungarian armies and achieved no more than temporary successes on sections of the Front, we recognise that this army suffered from serious moral deficiencies, and that it did not deserve the name of a well-trained national army. Fortunately for us and for our allies, Kuropatkin's apprehensions were proved to be justified; otherwise the world's history might have taken a different course. Even after the outbreak of the Revolution, the Russians proved themselves true to their national character on several occasions by offering a stout resistance; but, on the whole, the army was disorganised by the Revolution, and its capacity of resistance was diminished to a most serious extent. All too soon it proved necessary to restrict, or even to cancel entirely, those blessings of freedom which

[1] Stegemann, *loc. cit.*, I. 78.

had been bestowed upon the army. The temporary Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, General Kornilow, may have lacked great gifts of leadership, and possibly his conduct at the time of the Revolution was open to censure, but the views which he expressed at the Moscow State Conference are none the less worthy of attention. The General said :[1] "The old régime bequeathed to us an army in many respects deficient, but none the less it was an army capable of fighting and resisting and ready for self-sacrifice. As the result of a series of legal enactments emanating from people who had no understanding of the spirit of the army, it has been transformed into a distracted mob. . . . History and experience prove the necessity of discipline, without which no army can exist. Only an army welded together by an iron discipline, and controlled by the single and inflexible will of its leader is capable and worthy of victory. Only such an army can stand every test. . . . I am not opposed to the Soldiers' Committees, but I desire that their activities should be restricted to questions of economics and home policy, the limits of which must be

[1] *Armee und Flotte des freien Russland*, August 30th, 1917.

constitutionally defined, and that they should not interfere in any way with the conduct of military operations or the choice of leaders."

General Alexeiew, who temporarily resumed the chief command of the army of the Revolution in succession to Kornilow, said: "We no longer have an army capable of resisting the last blow which the Germans are preparing to deal us. The condition of the army is irremediable." Only an army the foundation of which was radically unsound could have sunk to such a condition in so brief a space of time.

In any case, the World-War has revealed very clearly that only a strongly united, well-trained national army is equal to great military achievements; such achievements cannot be performed by troops of the character of a militia. Past history teaches the same lesson.

CHAPTER II

BEFORE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The Old Prussian Army

The practice of maintaining a permanent standing army first made its appearance as a consequence of the Thirty Years War. Owing to the limited financial resources of the princes of that day, and the difficulty of provisioning troops during war in the thinly populated and meagrely cultivated countries, these hired armies could not be raised to great strength. When the campaign was ended, a large proportion of the troops were always discharged. This scanty armed force was substantially supplemented by a national defensive army, a so-called militia. In Brandenburg-Prussia, the Great Elector endeavoured to extend the national levy in his State. The national armed force of the Mark did good service on the occasion of the Swedish invasion of 1674–75, and the militia of the Duchy of Prussia, the so-called Wibranzen, was formed into regiments, and

took part in the war between Sweden and Poland. King Frederick I extended the organisation of the militia, and introduced short manœuvres. According to the rolls, the total strength of the Prussian militia was 25,000 men.

In France the militia was re-established under Louis XIV, with the avowed intention of forming an auxiliary army in addition to the standing army. It numbered 70,000 men, disposed in thirty regiments, and in the form both of complete units and of reinforcements for the hired standing regiments, it rendered good service in the numerous wars in which that monarch engaged. Later on, it was temporarily abolished, but was introduced once again, a decade before the Revolution. The organisation of the English militia, as it existed up to the time of Lord Haldane's army reforms of 1907, had been handed down from the Middle Ages. The militia served for the defence of the home country. From 1907 up to the beginning of the World-War, it formed the so-called Special Reserve of the standing army (the Expeditionary Force); while, out of the volunteers and the yeomanry, which existed in addition to the militia proper, was formed the Territorial

army. The militia of the United States of America was organised upon the old English model. Both countries possessed a large militia and a small hired army.

In Prussia, the provincial militia disappeared under King Frederick William I. The necessity of sustaining a world-conflict by his own unaided strength, induced Frederick the Great, during the Seven Years' War, to restore this institution once again. In East Prussia it was only established to a limited extent, but in Pomerania the national militia rendered no small assistance in defending the country against the Swedes and the Russians. In Pomerania and the Uckermark, 10 battalions, 6 squadrons were formed; in the Kurmark and Neumark, 3 battalions, 1 squadron each; in the province of Magdeburg and Halberstadt, 3 battalions. Retired officers were employed with these provincial troops.

On the one hand the great expense of hiring foreign soldiers, on the other hand the disturbance to town and country industries caused by such a levy of home recruits as had been made under Frederick I, induced King Frederick William I, in the year 1733, to adopt a new plan for the systematic reinforcement of the army by instituting

the Kanton Regulations. The various regiments were henceforth reinforced from definite districts allotted to them for this purpose and named " Kantons." As a result of this system the regiments acquired, through their local recruitment, a definite territorial connection, and in their Kantons they had at their disposal a perpetual war reserve consisting of men who had been trained and then discharged. Side by side with this system, the enlistment of foreign recruits still continued, so that, at the death of King Frederick William I in the year 1740, three-fourths of the total number of men serving with the colours were still foreigners, that is to say, not native Prussians, a circumstance only to be explained by the anxiety of the King to improve above all the economic condition of his country. The notion of universal military service did not exist at that time. Even though the Kanton Regulations decreed that : " Every Prussian subject is liable to bear arms," there were abundant exemptions from the Kanton system, which only pressed upon the lower and, in particular, the peasant class of the population. None the less, the Kanton system did, to a certain extent, pave the way for the subsequent introduction of universal military service,

inasmuch as it kindled and maintained in the mass of the population the consciousness of an obligation due to the King and the State.

It was thanks to this system that, in spite of the heavy losses during the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great had continuously at his command a reservoir for the replenishment of his army, a fact which was all the more important, since the hired foreign soldiers, particularly after defeats, could not always be depended upon. At the close of the reign of King Frederick, about half the army consisted of hired foreigners, though the latter were, for the most part, Germans from non-Prussian provinces, while some even were Prussians who were not subject to the Kanton obligation. In view of the world-wide glory which Prussian arms had won under King Frederick, it is not surprising that, under his successors, there was evidenced a disinclination to make radical changes in the constitution of the army, particularly in view of the fact that Frederick himself had left his father's system practically unchanged. Hence, the army which was defeated at Jena and Auerstedt, was still completely Frederician in organisation and character, little as it was animated or directed by the Frederician

spirit. It was by no means a worthless and demoralised army that was defeated in 1806.

Von der Goltz writes:[1] "The technical achievements in respect of manœuvring are really astonishing, if one considers that the length of service of the majority of the infantry was very short. It is true that the home-levies, the Kantonists, served as a rule for twenty years, but they only spent the first year with the colours, and even this period was often considerably reduced, sometimes even to three months. Moreover, they were only called up for manœuvres every two years at the most, so that the infantry soldier had in all only about one and three-quarter years of actual service." The cavalry suffered to a more serious extent under these conditions. It was inevitable that their standard of efficiency should decline, since cavalry cannot be rendered adequate for service in the field, when half their number are never seated on a horse except during their term of training, that is to say, for ten and a half months in the year.[2] Hence the conception of the old Prussian

[1] *Von Rossbach bis Jena und Auerstedt.* Berlin, 1906. Page 198. E. S. Mittler und Sohn, Königl. Hofbuchhandlung.

[2] Jany, *Urkundliche Beitrage,* 6 *Heft. Der Preussische Kavalleriedienst vor 1806,* p. 1.

army as a hired army with a long term of service is not wholly correct. Such being its composition, the credit for its training and excellent discipline must be attributed to the untiring zeal of capable officers and non-commissioned officers. This zeal has continued down to the present day, and is responsible for the fact that, during the World-War, even men who had only received a brief training always adapted themselves to the spirit of the whole army comparatively soon.

In the army of 1806 there was a great deal that was out of date, but it was not the composition and the method of training of the troops that were responsible for their defeat. All the individual faults and omissions which contributed to the total sum of misfortune in this campaign are seen to be of minor significance, when we compare the notions in regard to operations held by the respective leaders. The Prussian army owed its defeat first and foremost to the fact that it had to cope with a hitherto unknown mode of warfare conducted by a leader of genius, who was in fact the founder of modern warfare on a large scale.

The Americans and the War of Independence

Even Napoleon's military machine, though it was based upon other principles than the Prussian army of that time, was not really the nation in arms. The French army of the time of the Revolution did for a time answer to this description, but never completely; and it soon lost once again all semblance of a national army and was transformed into a prætorian army. The idea of replacing the standing army by a nation in arms had indeed frequently been suggested by the encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, and it gained new credit as a result of the War of Independence of England's North American colonies. The example of the North American militia presented itself as an ideal to the leaders of the French Revolution. How little capable that militia actually was of standing any serious test may be deduced from the following opinion of it expressed by Washington in 1776. The Commander-in-Chief of the Federal troops writes:[1] "If

[1] The German version of the following extracts is quoted by the author from *Milizheere* by Colonel v. Zimmermann (*Vierteljahrshefte für Truppenführung und Heereskunde*. 1911). The English text is taken from the *Writings of George Washington*. Collected and edited by W. C. Ford. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.—*Translator.*

I was called upon to declare upon oath, whether the militia have been most serviceable or hurtful upon the whole, I should subscribe to the latter. . . . Experience, which is the best criterion to work by, so fully, clearly and decisively reprobates the practice of trusting to militia, that no man, who regards order, regularity and economy, or who has any regard for his own honour, character, or peace of mind, will risk them upon this issue." [1] "The militia, who come in, you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when, and act, you cannot tell where, consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last at a critical moment." [2] In 1780 Washington writes: "Had we formed a permanent army in the beginning, which, by the continuance of the same men in the service, had been capable of discipline . . . we should not have been the greatest part of the war inferior to the enemy . . . enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunities to ruin them pass unimproved." [3]

To be sure, the militia could boast successes on certain occasions, the most important being at Saratoga, where, in 1777, their 11,000 men compelled Burgoyne, the English

[1] *loc. cit.*, IV. 445–6. [2] *loc. cit.*, V. 115.
[3] *loc. cit.*, VIII. 393–4.

General, with 6000 men, to lay down their arms. In the case of the English troops, whose numbers were inadequate to the extent of the theatre of war, and who were separated by the ocean from their home supplies, there was a lack of any centralised leadership. None the less, it is extremely improbable that the War of Independence would have ended victoriously for the American Colonies, if the American militia had not been backed up in sufficient strength by a standing army (even though it was only a weak standing army) and, later, by a French auxiliary corps. The espousal of the cause of the young Republic by the French may be said to have decided the issue.

General von Beseler [1] writes as follows: "The mass of the troops remained, throughout the whole duration of the eight years' war, a badly armed and badly equipped militia, whose achievements, when they were inspired by the necessities of the moment, were often astonishing and indeed heroic, but who showed themselves completely unequal to the demands of continuous and exhausting operations. This property of the

[1] *Der Freiheitskampf Nordamerikas und der Burenkrieg.* Lecture delivered before the Military Society at Berlin, 1901.

army gave a special character to the conduct of the war. The Americans remained throughout in a condition of alert defensive; they kept an eye on the position and movements of the enemy, and endeavoured to thwart the co-operation of the various divisions of their forces by obstructing their lines of march. This for the most part very passive procedure, which offered no opportunity for pushing matters to a decisive victory, was completely alien to Washington's energetic personality, and can only be explained by the deficiencies of the American forces in respect both of numbers and quality."

CHAPTER III

THE FRENCH ARMIES OF THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION AND UNDER NAPOLEON

The French Armies of the First Republic

The national army of the French Revolution was on a level with its American prototype as regards the meagreness of its achievements. In 1789, the army of the French kingdom numbered 236,000 men. By the addition of the provincial militia, it could, in case of war, be raised to 295,000 men. At a committee of the Convention which assembled in October 1789, a proposal was made for introducing universal military service. It was, however, rejected in favour of the retention of voluntary enlistment, that is to say, of a mercenary regular army such as had existed hitherto, because only an army of this nature seemed worthy of a free nation, especially since it was believed that, in case of need, recourse could be had at any time to the newly established National

Guard, which had taken the place of the provincial militia. This volunteer force, according to the lists for June 1790, already at that date numbered 2,571,700 citizens capable of bearing arms. Since the regular army showed a deficiency of over 30,000 men, it was necessary to have recourse to the National Guard in order to strengthen it. It was held to be out of the question to suggest to the free citizens that they should be compulsorily enlisted in the army. It was therefore decided, in 1791, that special battalions should be established, in the formation of which, however, that system of compulsion hitherto regarded with abhorrence could not be any longer dispensed with, so that the designation "Volunteer Battalions" did not really apply to them. As a compensation for their compulsory enlistment, these so-called volunteers were accorded numerous favours which were not enjoyed by the soldiers of the regular army, and this differentiation between men who were destined to fight side by side was necessarily prejudicial in its effects. The volunteers chose their own officers; they drew higher pay; and the punishments inflicted on them were very lenient as compared with those of the regular troops.

Further, they had the right to retire from the army at two months' notice, on the 1st of December. All the protests of the generals against these evils, and their repeated attempts simply to incorporate the volunteers in the regular troops were disregarded by the leaders of the Revolution. The conduct of the volunteers in the face of the enemy seldom corresponded to the hopes which had been placed on them.

Camille Rousset, in his work, *Les Volontaires*,[1] was the first to dispose of the legendary notions which had attached themselves to these volunteers. The various battalions were, of course, of very unequal worth. Some of them—in particular those who had elected as their officers members of the former provincial militia—fought well. Large numbers of the volunteers were filled with a lofty sense of honour and the purest patriotism, and not a few of these rose later to high rank in the army; but the organisation of the volunteer troops was inadequate. Even after Valmy, the Minister of War, described the volunteers as an undisciplined mob, and proposed the infliction of heavy penalties for their continual mutinies. General Biron considered that it was the

[1] Paris, 1870.

election of their own officers by the men which was above all prejudicial to discipline. The deputies of the Convention, who were despatched to the armies, complained of pillaging in their own country, and of the most brutal excesses on the part of these troops. Remonstrances were met only by riots and demands to be discharged. The men maintained that they were only intended for the defence of the frontiers and not to be led to the field of slaughter. Numbers of them simply left the ranks of their own accord. When, on the 18th of March 1793, Dumouriez was defeated by the Duke of Coburg at Neervinden, the volunteer battalions of his army broke up completely in the course of the retreat; he was left with only 20,000 men of the old regular troops.

In July 1792, the Convention declared "the country in danger," and hence all citizens capable of bearing arms to be liable for military service. By this means a further 300,000 men were procured. The battalions into which these were formed, the so-called "Federates," were even more unserviceable in the field than the volunteers. Mutinies in their case were part of the order of the day. The majority of them could only be armed with pikes, and nothing was done to

provide them with uniforms. The serious deficiencies which had characterised both the old and the new troops resulted in the introduction, in February 1793, of the so-called *Réquisition.* It was decreed by law that every unmarried citizen of from eighteen to forty years of age should be liable for military service until a total number of 300,000 men had been reached. Of this number, 100,000 were destined for the reinforcement of the regular army and 200,000 for the volunteer battalions. Since the law provided for numerous exemptions, and since the population was hostile to this conscription, the result of the *Réquisition* was far below expectations, namely, no more than 180,000 men.

Hence, on August 23rd, 1793, the Convention decreed the *levée en masse,* which declared all Frenchmen liable for military service, so long as the enemy remained on the soil of the Republic. A literal *levée en masse* was in fact only made in the threatened frontier provinces, and even there only temporarily; but none the less the law did procure the necessary recruits for filling up the gaps in the army, which were becoming more and more conspicuous. In October 1793, as a result of this law, the Republic

had 600,000 men under arms. The place of the voluntary system had been taken by an increasingly drastic system of compulsory service.

There had been a gradual reversion from a purely national army to a standing army, except that the latter, both as regards regulars and volunteers, was now replenished by compulsorily enlisted instead of by hired soldiers. In the matter of organisation, moreover, there was a return to earlier methods. Under a decree dated November 1793, the volunteer battalions were amalgamated with the regular troops. This process was carried out by degrees, each battalion of regulars being fused with two volunteer battalions to form a so-called half-brigade. The latter designation was all that remained to commemorate the long series of blunders which were made by the leaders of the Revolution, because they were filled with misleading abstract theories concerning the efficiency of national levies: blunders which, if the Coalition had pursued a more determined policy, must have brought about the downfall of France. In the year 1803, under the Consulate, the half-brigades were converted into regiments, and the circle was thus outwardly completed.

Only gradually was military discipline infused into these new troops. The insubordination which had been tolerated for years was not easily subdued. Rebellion, plunder and desertion, continued for a long while to be of ordinary occurrence. In April 1794, the general of a division at Landrecies in attempting to arrest the flight of a runaway soldier was shot. A whole half-brigade mutinied, and General Bernadotte only arrived just in time to rescue General Marceau from the rebels. Bernadotte's own half-brigade broke down in the face of the enemy, so that it was only by an energetic personal intervention that he was able to avert disaster.[1]

None the less, by the formation of the half-brigades, the organisation of the army was improved. Those mob tactics, peculiar to completely untrained levies, which made their appearance also in the American War of Independence, gave place more and more to systematic extended-order fire action.

In the employment of fire, the French army of the Revolution gradually became superior to the old European armies, who on the whole kept to the close shoulder to shoulder tactics. None the less, these skir-

[1] Klaeber, *Marschall Bernadotte.*

mishes did not possess the decisive significance which has commonly been attributed to them. The muzzle-loading rifle, with its slow fire and uncertain aim, and with the additional disadvantage that it could only be loaded standing, or at the most kneeling, did not permit of such a devastating massed rifle-fire as accords with our present-day notions. Of still greater advantage to the armies of the Revolution than their adroitness in skirmishing was the high degree of mobility which they had acquired in the course of the long war. Their experience of actual warfare gradually made up for the original defectiveness of their training. The national army, such as it was conceived at the beginning of the Revolution, was gradually transformed into a prætorian army, which, during its absence from the home country, gradually became denationalised; and the transformation was completed when a new Cæsar, in the person of Napoleon, assumed the command. The following words of Mommsen concerning Hamilcar Barca are equally applicable to Napoleon: "Like a true general, he was able to substitute his own person for his country in the affections of his soldiers; in the course of the long campaigns, the soldier came to regard the

camp as a second home, and his patriotism was replaced by enthusiasm for the flag and ardent devotion to his great leader." [1]

The Army of the First Empire

In the year 1798, a law relating to conscription rendered every Frenchman from twenty to twenty-five years of age liable for military service. None but the physically unfit and the married were exempted; all the rest could be enlisted in case of need. The population had only submitted to the *levée en masse* under the pressure of urgent danger, and as a temporary institution, and moreover the levy was only made in certain localities. Hence they resisted the new law with the utmost energy. The hope of seeing the recruiting for the army placed at length upon a sure foundation was not fulfilled. The number of those who escaped the obligation to serve was still large. Hence it was found necessary, in 1800, to sanction the purchase of exemption and the furnishing of a substitute. As soon as Napoleon, under the title of First Consul, assumed the direction of the State, he established order with a firm hand in place of the disorder, which had prevailed under the Directory in the department of recruiting for the army; and

[1] *Römische Geschichte*, I. 2.

the country gradually accustomed itself to the new method of enlistment, although it never became popular.

The warlike ardour of the nation soon died out after the repulse of the invasion of 1792 : to such an extent, in fact, that the French people exhibited very little affection for the victorious imperial army. The spirit of that army was embodied in the old soldiers. They infused steadiness into the ranks of the new recruits, who, in consequence of the arbitrary continuation by Napoleon of the extended conscription, flocked to the army in ever greater numbers. But, above all, in the course of the long war, an experienced officers' corps, the vehicle of a definite tradition, had been constructed out of elements which, at the beginning of the Revolution, threatened to become completely dispersed. None the less, the connection with the army of the *ancien régime* had by no means been completely lost. This connection was revealed most conspicuously in the case of the generals. Half the generals of the army which took the field in 1805 had already held officers' rank under the monarchy. But the corollary was, that the army was by no means devoid of senior officers who either had not adopted the profession of arms originally, or had not served in it

continuously. Three-fifths of the staff-officers, more than half of all the officers of the *Grande Armée* of 1805, had belonged to the royal army,[1] although very few of them had held officer's rank. The majority of them were still privates or sergeants at the beginning of the Revolution, and had left the army in order to occupy positions as officers with the volunteer battalions. Other non-commissioned officers and men had remained with the regular troops, and had been promoted, either to fill the places of officers of the aristocracy who had emigrated, or because they had distinguished themselves in the face of the enemy. They constituted in 1805 the senior captains and subaltern officers of the army, who, in spite of their experience of war, were, on account of their advanced age and their limited education, looked upon with small favour by their superior officers. In regard to the men belonging to the volunteer battalions who were promoted to officer's rank, many proved unsatisfactory; but many, on the other hand, were individuals of distinguished intelligence and culture since the huge upheaval of the time and the anarchy at home induced many men of patriotic and energetic temperament to enter the army. The latter, together with

[1] Alombert-Colin, *Campagne de 1805 en Allemagne*, I.

the pupils from the schools at St. Cyr and Fontainebleau, represented the younger and more educated officers of the infantry and cavalry. The ranks of the officers of the artillery and the engineers were replenished by the pupils from the joint school at Metz.

A considerable number of the officers of the regular infantry had belonged to the so-called *vélites* of the Guard. Young men of good family also enlisted in the army as volunteers in comparatively large numbers; and these were promoted to officer's rank after a short term of service, and frequently passed up through the various subordinate positions with astonishing rapidity. In this connection, and owing to the growing need of officers, there were frequent exhibitions of favouritism which were strongly resented by the old soldiers. There were even cases of men who had never done service with the unit being made officers. None the less, in the year 1805, it could still be said that the troops were commanded by young generals and colonels, for the most part also comparatively young staff-officers, and old captains and lieutenants.[1]

Clausewitz writes [2] with reference to the

[1] Alombert-Colin, *loc. cit.*

[2] *Vom Kriege. Skizzen zum 8 Buch 3 Kapitel B.* "On War," III. 101. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, Ltd., London.

French army of the First Empire: "After all this was perfected by the hand of Buonaparte, this military power, based on the strength of the whole nation, marched over Europe, smashing everything in pieces so surely and certainly that, wherever it encountered only the old-fashioned armies, the result was not doubtful for a moment." And Napoleon did, in fact, make ever-increasing demands on the man-power of the country, of which he had originally shown himself sparing. Between 1805 and 1807 he demanded 420,000 recruits. Purely arbitrary levies were substituted for the regular system. The age of enlistment, which in 1804 had still been twenty years four months, was lowered in 1807 to eighteen years six months.[1] After the defeat of his army in Russia, Napoleon called no less than 1,227,000 men to the colours within the space of fourteen and a half months.

The constant increase of its numbers, together with the losses sustained by the veterans, gradually impaired the intrinsic value of the army. In the latter wars of the Empire, it forfeited more and more the character of a professional army, without, however, acquiring that of a trained national army, since the feverishness with which

[1] Morvan, *Soldat Impérial*, I.

Napoleon plunged into one war after another did not afford the possibility of an even tolerably thorough training. The infantry, in spite of its deterioration, still performed brilliant achievements on the field of battle, under the eye of the Emperor; but as early as 1809 it became evident that, on the whole, its value was no longer what it had been. Finally, the new recruits of 1813 broke down. The new troops did indeed display great courage at Gross-Görschen and Bautzen, but the victories gained by the Emperor were Pyrrhic victories. On both occasions the army went to pieces completely during the pursuit. Napoleon himself declares, in reference to this fact: "With a young army it is possible to take a strong position, but not to carry through a campaign to a conclusion, in accordance with a definite plan." [1]

It was not to be wondered at. Only fourteen days before Gross-Görschen Marshal Marmont had written: [2] "Here [at Hanau] we have a large collection of men, but not an organised army. The result would be disastrous if these troops were to be brought into collision with the enemy before they had acquired some firmness and had been furnished with all the necessities."

[1] *Maximes de guerre et pensée de Napoléon I.*
[2] Rousset, *Le grande armée de 1813.*

After the Battle of the Katzbach, Macdonald's army was completely dispersed. Rousset writes in regard to it:[1] "If the Battle of the Katzbach had been fought with stout men and thoroughly trained soldiers, it is possible that Macdonald would not have been defeated, or at any rate would only have suffered such a reverse as could have been made good again; fought as it was with young men and with soldiers whose training dated from yesterday, it became the beginning of a catastrophe. No clearer demonstration has ever been furnished of the power of physical and moral energy, of fortitude of body and spirit in the face of inclemency of the weather, hunger and thirst and all the sufferings of war: the power, in fact, of that stoicism which is no sudden phenomenon, but the gradual and unconscious result of military training, which is, in fact, nothing else than a heightened sense of honour and duty." It was not so much the effectiveness of the enemy's weapons or his pursuit which shattered the army as the excessively bad weather. Out of 100,000 men, the Marshal brought back only 50,000 to Bautzen. Lauriston's (5th) corps of this army had gone into battle on the 26th of August with more than 18,000 men; at the

[1] *loc. cit.*

end of the month it numbered only 6000 men. Lauriston urged Berthier, the Major-General of the army, to bring up some of the Guards, in the hope that the sight of a really efficient body might have a steadying effect on the shattered army. After the defeat of Dennewitz, Marshal Ney brought his army into safety at Torgau, behind the Elbe. He had to admit that he could no longer control the troops, that they refused to obey and were dispersing. These are phenomena which have never manifested themselves to the same extent in firmly organised and disciplined armies, even after retreats; and it must be remembered moreover that neither the Katzbach nor Dennewitz was a battle of envelopment on a large scale.

The Emperor fully realised the deficiencies of his army of recruits, and therefore took all the more pains to create a thoroughly trustworthy picked troop by strengthening his Guard, which had been instituted after the Russian catastrophe. Subsequently, during the truce and in the autumn campaign of 1813, some of the other corps attained greater firmness, but, on the whole, the army never overcame the characteristic deficiencies of an improvisation.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY IN THE WAR OF LIBERATION [1]

The Work of Scharnhorst

The Prussian army of the year 1813 was also an improvisation.

In the reorganisation which was set on foot after the Peace of Tilsit, Scharnhorst endeavoured above all to secure the realisation of his great conception of a nation in arms. The hiring of foreign soldiers was completely done away with. Only sons of the Fatherland were henceforth to partake of the honour of defending their native soil. Universal military service did not yet exist; on the contrary, there were numerous exemptions from the liability for service. It had been Scharnhorst's original intention that the army should be maintained at such strength that the mass of the population capable of bearing arms could be trained in

[1] *Das Preussische Heer der Befreiungskriege. Herausgegeben vom Grossen Generalstabe. Kriegsgesch. Abteilung II.* Berlin, 1912–14. E. S. Mittler und Sohn, Königl. Hofbuchhandlung.

it, while the more cultivated classes could be dismissed after a short term of service and recruits inserted in their place. At the same time, preparations were made for the formation of a provincial militia, the Landwehr of 1813, which, in case of war, should be used as garrison troops. In it were to be enrolled all those men who had not been through the school of the standing army. The question of creating such militia troops had been frequently discussed before this time, and the formation of seventy-eight provincial reserve battalions had already been carried out in the year 1806 on the outbreak of war.

These far-reaching plans of Scharnhorst for the reorganisation of the army could not be put into execution, because Napoleon, by a treaty of September 1808, imposed upon Prussia the humiliating condition that she should not maintain more than 42,000 men with the colours. Since, however, the State had, by the Peace of Tilsit, been reduced to half its former size, comprising rather less than 5,000,000 inhabitants, it was no longer in a position to maintain a strong army in time of peace, and hence this limitation of its total armed strength was less vexatious to Prussia than the further

conditions of the treaty. The bodies of troops to be maintained were limited to a fixed number, and the organisation of a militia was forbidden. By this restriction, the system of the skeleton army, only to be filled out in case of war, and its support by means of the provincial militia, as well as the principal ideas underlying Scharnhorst's reforms, were rendered abortive. Napoleon could not, of course, alter the fact that there was still a considerable war reserve of trained soldiers in the Kantons. By far the greater number of these were men who had received their training in the old army; a smaller proportion consisted of the so-called "Krümper," that is to say, men who after a short term of service had been discharged, in order to make room for other recruits. The regiments, in their lists of the reserves available in their Kantons, do not distinguish between the "Krümper" and the discharged soldiers of an earlier date. Moreover it is obvious that, in the five years between 1808 and 1812, Scharnhorst's Krümper system could not furnish any considerable war reserve. Further, the strict supervision which the French kept over the country made it necessary to confine the number of men thus discharged within comparatively narrow

limits. It was therefore decreed in 1808 that from three to five men every month should be withdrawn from each company [1] and their place taken by others. In 1811 large numbers of the Krümper were assembled for some months in labour brigades and employed in making entrenchments. In the same year it was prescribed that every year, for four successive months, eight men each month should be enrolled as recruits in every company, and that the same number of older men should be discharged. These insufficiently trained Krümper were summoned to manœuvres for a short time, and from time to time also they were drilled by officers despatched to the Kantons. Experience, however, proved this system to be far from satisfactory. Hence, in 1812, a six months' term of enlistment was introduced, and at the same time it was decreed that no men who had served less than a year should be discharged as Krümper. The mobilisation in the following year of almost half the army for the auxiliary corps to be sent by Napoleon against Russia interrupted both the putting into full execution of the Krümper system and the tranquil continuance of the development of the army.

[1] The peace strength was 150 men, war strength 188.

Conduct of the Various Sections of the Prussian Army in the War of Liberation

The number of men with experience of military service available in the country was sufficient to enable the regular troops to be raised to their full strength in the spring of 1813, and, by the enrolment of new recruits, by degrees fifty-two reserve battalions as well as twenty-three and a quarter garrison battalions were erected. Of the reserve battalions, five were converted into regular battalions during the truce, seven were dispersed; the rest were formed into reserve regiments which comparatively soon reached the standard of the old skeleton regiments. It was these skeleton regiments which, at Gross-Görschen and Bautzen, restored the ancient glory of Prussian arms. Boyen, who was afterwards Minister of War, pronounced the following opinion concerning them: "Well-trained, led by young, energetic and experienced officers, and full of confidence in their new organisation, that half of the army which had shared in the campaign of 1812 had acquired experience of war and, above all, self-confidence; the troops were

encouraged by the respect which they inspired in friend and foe, and from general down to the last musketeer, they were filled with a praiseworthy sense of honour." [1]

On February 3rd, 1813, the order was issued for the formation of the volunteer Jäger detachments. They were to be linked to the existing troops, and were intended to comprise those individuals who had hitherto escaped the Kanton obligation, that is to say, in particular, the cultivated and well-to-do classes, who were able to equip and support themselves, for it was still considered out of the question to suggest to these men that they should take their place in the ranks by the side of the common soldiers. This concession to the notions prevailing at that time was not a success. If they had definitely entered the ranks, these Jäger volunteers, like their successors the one-year volunteers, would have been able to influence the other men by their example, and this, more particularly in view of the low standard of culture at that time, would have been of great value. Even experienced officers allowed themselves to be misled by the ideology of the time. It was believed

[1] *Erinnerungen.* Herausg. von F. Nippold. Leipzig, 1889–90.

that the Jäger detachments would be able to render valuable services forthwith in the so-called "light service," namely, in skirmishing, and in reconnaissance and escort duty; and the fact was overlooked that for these duties a far more thorough training was required than for service in the ranks. Certain occurrences in the American War of Independence,[1] La Vendée,[2] and in Spain had given rise to this notion. It was overlooked, however, that the town-bred elements, of which the Jäger detachments were chiefly composed, had, for the most part, hitherto occupied themselves with learned studies and could not, therefore, possess the qualities of those guerilla fighters. This was to appear very shortly. In the spring campaign of 1813, Blücher ordered that, in face of the enemy, a soldier of the regular army was always to be posted as double post with a Jäger volunteer. The marching achievements of the Jäger detachments were, up to the year 1814, very insignificant. If any considerable demands were made upon them in this respect, a very large number were left behind. The Jäger volunteers and the other volunteer corps did, to be sure, contribute to the army

[1] *See* p. 124. [2] *See* p. 109.

a spirit of generous enthusiasm which ought not to be underestimated. Moreover, they formed a good training school for officers of the Landwehr; but, considered as fighting troops, their performances were of very small value. By an order of the 9th of February 1813, exemption from the Kanton obligation was abolished, and therewith universal military service was introduced, at any rate for the duration of the war. The order issued on the 17th of March to the Landwehr and Landsturm summoned the mass of the nation to arms. Every man capable of bearing arms between the ages of seventeen and forty years who was not a member of the standing army, whether he had already served or not, was liable for service in the Landwehr. As soon as the formation of the Landwehr was completed, the raising of the Landsturm was to be commenced. The latter were to be called upon for "a war of self-defence," in case of enemy invasion; though, as a matter of fact, they have never been employed in actual warfare. For the purpose of putting these measures into operation, the State was divided into four "Military Governments," with a military and civil governor at the head of each. The activities of these Military

Governments were similar to those of our deputy-chief-command in war. They were equipped with a large measure of power and responsibility, and, as a result of their labours, the task of the central authority, the Ministry of War, which was at that time in a backward stage of development, was considerably lightened. The task of replenishing the army lay chiefly in the hands of these provincial authorities, and, in spite of the great difficulties which had to be faced, was upon the whole successfully accomplished.

The organisation of the Landwehr, in spite of the self-sacrificing spirit of the classes who were called to its ranks, made but slow progress. In the autumn of the year 1813, the troops still lacked uniforms and equipment. The officers of the Landwehr were elected by the district committees, and the appointments were then confirmed by the king. Only the staff officers were directly nominated by the king. The Landwehr officers included several who had formerly belonged to the regular army. The officers commanding the regiments, without exception, and the bulk of those commanding the battalions, had belonged to the old army. It ought not to be forgotten that

the magnificent improvisation which the Prussian army exhibited in the War of Liberation was only rendered possible by the assistance of the numerous officers of the old army, who were available in the country or who hastened to it from other parts of Germany. As a result of the reorganisation, the replenishment of the officers' corps was placed upon a different footing. It preserved its aristocratic character, insomuch as the nomination to officer's rank by the king took precedence of election by the officers' corps. For the rest, the latter opened its ranks to any man who gave proof of satisfying the requirements in respect both of professional knowledge and of general culture, whereas hitherto, in the overwhelming majority of the various units, the acquisition of officer's rank had been a privilege confined to those of noble birth. In the few years between the Peace of Tilsit and the beginning of the War of Liberation, it was only the youngest officers who could be affected by these innovations; it was chiefly the much-abused officers' corps, the "Junkers" of 1806, who in 1813 led the Prussian army to victory; though this officers' corps had, it is true, been considerably renovated as compared with that of 1806,

and was filled with an entirely different spirit.

It was only because experienced officers were available for most of the higher positions in the Landwehr also that it was possible to employ the latter in the field. It had not been originally anticipated by Scharnhorst that they should be so employed, and indeed, in view of their composition and their lack of arms and equipment, they were very ill adapted for the purpose. They had not enough guns to go round, so that the front ranks in the triple array which prevailed at that time were often armed with pikes. Guns had to be captured from the enemy. For the most part without cloaks, clad only in linen breeches, many of them without shoes, these new formations, who moreover were unaccustomed to hardships, were exposed to the inclemencies of the rainy autumn of 1813. None the less, necessity demanded that recourse should be had to the Landwehr. In order to supplement in some degree their lack of solid cohesion, the Landwehr troops were, at the end of the truce, inserted in the divisions known as mixed brigades, the latter as a rule being made up of one line regiment, one reserve regiment and one Landwehr regiment. The

cavalry regiments in the campaign of August 1813 consisted in some cases of two regular and two Landwehr squadrons, although the judgments expressed in regard to the officers and men of the Landwehr cavalry were much more favourable than those on the infantry. In spite of all the zeal expended upon them, and although their training was entrusted to officers of the regular army, the Landwehr troops were, at the beginning of the autumn campaign, still very unsatisfactory, as was indeed inevitable, since they consisted of completely untrained men belonging to a wide variety of annual levies. At the beginning, the junior officers frequently lacked the requisite authority and professional knowledge. Serious crime and desertions, sometimes attaining formidable proportions, were the order of the day. Our modern Landwehr, every member of which has been through the school of the standing army, has nothing in common with the Landwehr of 1813 save its name. Even at that time a few regiments and battalions stood out in favourable contrast with the mass, in consequence either of a particularly fortunate composition or of the valour of their commanders.

The Landwehr was not equal to coping

with difficult military situations. A Landwehr battalion of the Silesian army completely broke down in the Battle of Niederau on the 23rd of August. When the commander of this battalion, in order to protect it from the enemy's artillery fire, which was causing losses in its ranks, tried to move it back quite a little distance to the cover of an undulation of ground, as the result of a shell bursting in its midst, it dispersed in all directions. The desperate attempts of the officers to reassemble the battalion were to no purpose. It had to be disbanded.

The Brandenburg Landwehr employed with the Northern Army, where it was a case of directly defending house and home, upon the whole acquitted themselves well. But even they displayed the characteristic qualities of an improvised body of troops. Colonel von Zimmermann writes in reference to the Battle of Hagelberg on the 27th of August 1813:[1] "Although the Prussians had a considerable numerical superiority over the enemy, the quite insignificant losses incurred in the first encounter were sufficient to throw the latter into utter confusion

[1] *Vierteljahrshefte für Truppenführung und Heereskunde.* 1912. 2 *Heft.*

and even to embarrass the second encounter. It was only thanks to the intervention of Lieutenant-Colonel von der Marwitz that what was on the way to becoming a defeat was converted at the last moment into a victory. The battalions were so untrained that there could be no question of tactical control of the fighting. The battle swayed as chance directed; and all the Landwehr battalions had moments of weakness, when they were only saved from disaster by the bravery of their officers. It should not be forgotten moreover that the enemy troops consisted of recruits and were of very inferior worth."

The Landwehr of Kleist's corps, the main army, went to pieces to a serious extent in the course of the retreat from Dresden. At the Battle of Kulm, on the 30th of August, a Landwehr regiment, as soon as it encountered the enemy's fire, faced about and collided with a line regiment which was following it as a reserve. Temporary panics have been known to seize even otherwise trustworthy troops, but they have generally been due to exceptional circumstances, and in any case have been more quickly recovered from. Occurrences, however, like those we have mentioned, which sprang from quite

trifling causes, illustrate how very little reliance can be placed on untrained troops. Subsequently, the Landwehr was gradually raised to the level of an efficient fighting troop. Even the stern Yorck admitted, after the Battle of Wartenburg on the 3rd of October, that his Silesian Landwehr had stood the great test with high distinction. The battalions who helped to win the passage of the Elbe, as a matter of fact, were of hardly more than the strength of a company, and hence were made up of the stoutest and most zealous members of the Landwehr.

What was, if anything, an even more serious cause of annoyance to their leaders than the occasional collapse of the Landwehr troops in the course of an engagement, were the heavy losses which they sustained on the march. During the evolutions of the main army in the middle of September, the regular troops of Kleist's corps were diminished by only 3·5 per cent. as a result of their exertions, while the Landwehr of the same corps were diminished by 22 per cent. As a result of the severe marches which preceded the Battle of Leipzig, out of the 28,500 men of Kleist's corps, only about 4400 Landwehr troops remained.[1] The ad-

[1] Zimmermann, *loc. cit.*

vance to the Bober, the retreat behind the Katzbach, and the pursuit after the battle of the 26th of August, demanded enormous exertions from the troops amid unceasing torrents of rain; and to these exertions the Landwehr or Yorck's corps proved themselves as inadequate as the recruits of Macdonald's army.[1] In the first eighteen days of the autumn campaign, the losses of the corps in respect to regular troops were 4040 out of a total of 16,747, while, in respect to Landwehr troops, its losses were 7092 out of a total of 13,370. As a result of the increasing number of desertions, corporal punishment was restored by royal decree in the Upper Silesian Landwehr. In this connection, however, it ought to be borne in mind that patriotism in the Prussian sense was at that time hardly to be expected from the Polish inhabitants of Upper Silesia, nor yet from the West Prussians, concerning whom also many complaints were made. Moreover, in view of the defective education of the mass of the lower classes and the conditions in which they lived at that time, they could not be expected to display the same degree of enthusiasm for and intelligent participation in the conflict as was evinced

[1] *See* p. 60.

on the outbreak of the World-War. Droysen [1] remarked justly: "It would have been an easier task to have improved the discipline of the Landwehr if one could have clothed their nakedness and satisfied their hunger. It must be admitted that the exhaustion of the men as the result of continuous forced marches and their insufficient nourishment were responsible for a great deal. It was not from their fear of a flogging that many of the Landwehr, after they had recuperated themselves at home, returned to the corps once again, so that the Landwehr, which on the 1st of September had totalled 6277, fourteen days later had increased to 8540."

Lack of food and clothing endangers the military discipline of even the best troops: how much more serious, then, must be its effects on such undisciplined masses as these? Hence, on the one hand we have, in the case of the Landwehr of 1813, to admit extenuating circumstances which the Prussian State had not at that time the means to remedy; but, on the other hand, these new troops exhibited all the defects resulting from an inadequate training. It was clear that a short term of training could at the most

[1] *Yorcks Leben*, III.

produce external results; it could not effect the inward transformation of the man into the soldier. Clausewitz speaks to the same effect when he says:[1] "Physical exertions must be practised less to accustom the body to them than the mind."

If one wishes to form a just estimate of the efficiency of the militia as it existed in the form of the Prussian Landwehr of that time, it ought in the first place to be remembered that the enemy forces to which it was opposed were themselves of very inferior worth. Subsequently, in the course of the long war, and under the influence of increasing success, the Landwehr rose more and more to the level of the regular troops, and in 1815 could scarcely be distinguished from the latter, with the exception of the regiments drawn from the new western provinces, which were composed for the most part of former soldiers of Napoleon.

[1] *Vom Kriege*, I. Buch, 8 Kap.

CHAPTER V

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Peace Years from 1814 to 1859

Universal military service, which originated in 1813 out of the need of the moment, and was at first intended to last only for the duration of the war, was made a permanent institution by the law of September 3rd, 1814, concerning the liability for military service. At the same time the Landwehr also was declared to be a permanent institution. This law, together with the order of the 21st of November 1815, concerning the Landwehr, henceforth constituted the basis of Prussia's armed strength. Every Prussian capable of bearing arms was bound to serve in the standing army from the age of 20 up to the age of 23, in the reserve from the age of 23 up to the age of 25, in the first levy of the Landwehr from the age of 25 up to the age of 32, in the second levy of the Landwehr from the age of 32 up to the age of 39. The

Landsturm was composed of all those capable of bearing arms between 17 and 49 years of age who were not included either in the standing army or the Landwehr. The privilege of the one-year voluntary service was subject to proof of a certain degree of culture and the condition that the individual should bear his own cost of maintenance. This institution took the place of the volunteer Jäger detachments.

The organisation of the army, in the shape which it assumed after the first and second Peace of Paris, was the work of General von Boyen, who occupied the post of Minister of War from June 1814. He made it his aim to effect a complete separation between the standing army and the Landwehr, so that they should to a certain extent exist as two armies side by side. Both, however, were to be equally subject to the generals in command in their district. For every regiment of the standing army, there were to be two Landwehr regiments. By this means the Minister hoped to enable the country, in the event of a war, to acquit itself in a manner befitting its recovered status of a Great Power and its recent and considerable increase of territory, and at the same time to adapt himself to the bad state of the national

finances. It very soon appeared, however, that the number of men who had been through the school of the standing army and had passed on to the Landwehr, was not anything like sufficient to meet requirements, more particularly since about a third of the standing army was composed of soldiers who had re-enlisted or had prolonged their time of service. Owing to the hard times and the difficulty of finding lucrative employment, military service was regarded by many as a tolerable means of gaining a livelihood, and, moreover, the old tradition of the professional soldiery was not yet extinguished even among the common people. Hence it arose that, as the years went on, a constantly increasing number of recruits who had only been through a term of service of a few weeks were put into the Landwehr forthwith. Consequently the infantry of the Landwehr were in danger of undergoing a constant deterioration, and the cavalry of becoming completely worthless. At the same time, the number of competent Landwehr officers was considerably diminished. The majority of those among them most fitted for their position by character and inclination had, after the war, received appointments in the regular army, and though the Landwehr still possessed a number

of officers who had stood the test of war, the younger officers and non-commissioned officers had not received a sufficiently thorough military training.

In the great manœuvres which took place at the Rhine, in the autumn of the year 1819, before King Frederick William III, these deficiencies were very clearly revealed, and owing to this fact and also to the necessity of effecting further economies in the administration of the State revenues, it was resolved to diminish the number of the Landwehr troops. Boyen's theory, that the Landwehr should constitute an independent militia, was set on one side. The General retired from the position of Minister of War at the end of 1819, and, under his successor, General von Hacke, 32 battalions and as many squadrons of the Landwehr were disbanded, so that henceforward, for every regiment of the standing army, there was one Landwehr regiment of the same size. Every Landwehr battalion comprised, as before, one squadron. To the first levy of the Landwehr were attached in time of peace weak battalion-staffs and the sergeants-major of the companies, corresponding to our present-day Landwehr district command; the second levy of the Landwehr, which was destined

mainly for garrison duties, was provided with no staffs in time of peace. Fifty-four garrison companies which continued to exist after the disbanding of the garrison battalions in the year 1820 were to serve as cadres for it in case of war.

The hopes which had been placed upon this remodelling of the army, and especially upon the closer connection of the Landwehr with the standing army, were only to a very small extent realised. In the year 1830, when it became necessary to assemble troops for the protection of the western and, more particularly, the eastern frontiers, serious deficiencies were revealed; and yet it had only been a question of raising four army corps under Field-Marshal Count Gneisenau, as a result of the Polish Revolution. It was unmistakably revealed that the war-preparedness of the army had not been ensured to such an extent as was required for the pursuit of an energetic and far-sighted policy. In order to place the regular troops of the army corps upon the eastern frontier on a war footing, it was necessary to have recourse to the first levy of the Landwehr. In the west, the large and numerous places of arms demanded such strong garrisons that the possibility of forming any considerable army

for purposes of operations seemed to be excluded. Since the year 1820 the Landwehr had still further deteriorated in respect to efficiency for purposes of war, since, from motives of economy, simultaneously with the reduction of its numbers, the supposed strengths of the various units of the standing army had also been reduced. In order, therefore, to guarantee to some extent the war strength of the Landwehr, in spite of the fact that a smaller number of battalions were levied, the following very dubious measure was resorted to. Every year, a number of so-called War Reserve recruits were given a superficial training lasting six weeks, and were then enrolled in the reserve. These men and numerous so-called Landwehr recruits, who had only done from four to six weeks' service on the occasion of the Landwehr manœuvres, now made up half of the first levy of the Landwehr. Since the meagre financial resources of the State forbade the employment of the most effectual remedy for these defects, namely, the formation of increased cadres, in the year 1833 the two-years' term of service was introduced in the infantry, in order, by increasing the total number of recruits every year to ensure that a sufficient number of thoroughly

trained men should be available in case of war. It was expressly stated that this was to be only a temporary measure. In 1852, the three-years' term of service was again introduced.

In the 'forties of last century, no intelligent person could any longer blind himself to the fact that, although the population had almost doubled itself since the year 1814, the annual enlistment of recruits did not amount to more than forty thousand, universal military service was a mere illusion.[1]

In the troubled years between 1848 and 1850, further unpleasant experiences in connection with the Landwehr were added to those of previous occurrence. Above all, the officers' corps left much to be desired. At that time, there was no such thorough and systematic training of the officers of the Landwehr as exists in the case of our present-day officers of the retired class; hence the bulk of the officers of the Landwehr lacked any experience of service. As a result of this circumstance and of the defective training of the men, the Landwehr proved itself unfitted for immediate employment in the field.

[1] Courbière, *Die Preussische Landwehr in ihrer Entwichlung von 1815 bis zier Reorganisation von 1859.* Berlin 1867. E. S. Mittler und Sohn.

Only by detaching to it numerous officers of the standing army was it found possible to give it the necessary firmness. On the other hand, in view of the weakness of the standing army, the co-operation of the Landwehr in the fighting in the province of Posen, in Schleswig, and in Baden could not be dispensed with. How little the army, as a result of its constitution at that time, was really efficient for purposes of war was inevitably and unmistakably revealed when the mobilisation of the whole army in the year 1850 for the first time put to a serious test the military organisation which had existed since the year 1814.

One consequence of the experience gained at that time was that, in order, in case of mobilisation, to be able to fill at least half the positions of commanders of the companies and squadrons of the Landwehr with captains and cavalry captains of the active army, in the year 1852 the number of these officers with the regular troops was correspondingly increased in time of peace. At the same time it was endeavoured to establish a closer connection between the regular troops and the Landwehr by arranging that henceforward every line regiment should be permanently brigaded even in peace time with

the Landwehr regiment of the corresponding number. Consequently, the divisions included two and the army corps four of these mixed brigades. The skeleton corps of the Landwehr cavalry regiments were brought into intimate association with the regular cavalry regiments. Further, the three-years' term service was restored in the infantry. These measures, though good in themselves, could at the most effect a trifling amelioration, but by no means a complete removal, of the existing evils. Such a removal only ensued as a result of the reorganisation of the year 1859.

The Reorganisation of 1859

Beginning from the mobilisation of the year 1859, the Prince of Prussia, as regent, organised the army upon a new system based upon a new law with respect to the liability to military service. Thereby he forged the tool with the aid of which he established Prussia in her rightful position as a Power.

By the reorganisation of 1859, the first levy of the Landwehr was completely separated from the field army proper, and was destined to be employed in war only for tasks of secondary importance. On the other hand, the infantry regiments of the standing

army were almost doubled, and the other arms were considerably strengthened. The term of service with the colours was fixed at three years, that with the reserve was increased from two to four years; service in the Landwehr was reduced from fourteen to nine years, four with the first and five with the second levy. Only in the case of necessity was the latter to be utilised for garrison purposes, for which alone it had been originally destined; since now the first levy was to a large extent available for these duties. These measures improved the war-preparedness of the army very considerably, and they were of the more importance, since railways had recently become an important instrument of war, and by their aid, mobilisation and transport were effected so rapidly that only troops permanently in readiness could meet the requirements of the chief command.

The Prusso-German Army down to the Present Day

The army thus remodelled on the basis of universal military service proved in 1866 its intrinsic superiority both to the Austrian army and to the south German contingents. The striking success of Prussian arms

rendered everywhere apparent the advantages of universal military service. The fact that its influence in Saxony and in the South German contingents was revealed so promptly was due to the circumstance that the existing conditions in these districts were very favourable to it. As a result of that highly developed sense of duty common to all the German races, in combination with the example furnished by the Prussian army, the German army was already in 1870 welded together by a strong sense of unity. After the victorious war of 1870–71 and the foundation of the German Empire, the Prussian army legislation was, under the constitution, extended to the German Empire.

In the year 1874, the "Ersatzreserve," consisting of two classes, was formed out of (*a*) those fit for service with high exemption numbers; (*b*) those exempted from service on account of domestic circumstances; (*c*) those temporarily unfit for service; (*d*) those suffering from minor physical defects. The first class, embracing five annual levies of the above, was to serve, in case of mobilisation, for the reinforcement of the army and the formation of reserve troops. The members of the second class belonged to the "Ersatzreserve" up to the age of 31, when

they were transferred to the Landsturm. The second class were not obliged to attend manœuvres, whereas the first class might be called upon in time of peace to attend four manœuvres, two of ten weeks' and four weeks' duration respectively, and two of two weeks' duration each. Unfortunately, in the year 1893, when the two-years' term of service was introduced, this obligation to attend manœuvres was allowed to lapse in the case of all arms except the cavalry and horse artillery. In the year 1888 the second levy of the Landwehr was revived, and the liability to service in the Landsturm was extended from 42 to 45 years of age.

Not only had the increased armaments of France and Russia rendered it necessary, during the years preceding the World-War, to add continuously to Germany's army burdens, but also the political situation was such as to demand a still further strengthening of our armed force. It is true that the peace strength of the German army had, since the year 1874, been increased by about 350,000 men; nevertheless we were on the point of being outstripped by France, with her population of about 27 million less than ours. Already the situation was similar to that which existed in Prussia before the

reorganisation of 1859; seeing our population was nearly 67,000,000, the liability to military service could no longer be described as universal; the high moral value of universal service was in danger of being lost once again. Hence the Army Bill of 1913 proposed to extend the obligation to military service in accordance with the size of the population by increasing the annual enlistment of recruits by 63,000 men. In order to cover the cost, an army contribution of a milliard marks was levied.

The putting into execution of the army-increase voted in 1913 was interrupted by the outbreak of the World-War. The crowds of war volunteers who thronged to the colours in August 1914, and the huge augmentation which our army underwent in the course of the war, afford convincing proof how large a proportion of our national strength had not been utilised in time of peace with a view to future wars.

CHAPTER VI

THE OPPOSITION TO STANDING ARMIES IN GERMANY DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Opposition to the Army Reorganisation of 1859 in Prussia

The reorganisation of the Prussian army was, as we know, accomplished only after a prolonged and bitter struggle with the national assembly, which was several times dissolved. In spite of its opposition, King William, supported by Bismarck and Roon, insisted on that remodelling of the army which he recognised to be necessary. "At the present day," wrote Heinrich von Sybel [1] in 1889, "unanimous appreciation is accorded to the work of King William, without which the foundation of the German Empire would have remained a mere illusion. At that time, however, it was not so." The remodelling of the army organisation was regarded as a slight upon the Landwehr,

[1] *Die Begründung des Deutschen Reiches durch Wilhelm I.*, II. 375.

" that splendid product of the War of Liberation, the genuine embodiment of the people in the army." The delegate of the commission for considering the Army Bill, Major-General Stavenhagen, a retired officer, agreed in 1860, to an augmentation of the levy of recruits by 63,000 men; and he raised no objection to the increase of the regular regiments. But he, too, denounced the separating of the standing army and the Landwehr " as an insult to the latter, and an abandonment of the most sacred traditions of the Prussian nation."

The reasons why it was from the outset impossible that the achievements of the Landwehr in the War of Liberation should have been equal to those of the regular troops have already been explained; but the fact has no less been emphasised that they did frequently break down. If, in spite of this, a large proportion of the cultivated classes gave the Landwehr the chief credit for the work of liberation, this must be mainly due to the fact that the bulk of humanity concern themselves with the external aspect of historical events and do not seek for their deeper causes. The old Prussian army had been defeated; the new army, an improvisation, largely interspersed

with untrained Landwehr troops, had conquered. By the majority this was accounted sufficient proof that it was mainly the addition of the popular element that had secured the victory. "For the language of sound human reason," writes Treitschke,[1] "the crabbed party spirit of the liberals had no ear. The phrase 'Freischar' (free army) sounded as seductively to them as the phrase 'Freistaat' (free state). Those insignificant Prussian volunteer corps were compared with the Spanish guerillas, and the 'sacred bands' were regarded as the true authors of Napoleon's downfall." Moreover the officers of the Landwehr contributed something to the spread of this notion. Had they not held their own in the field equally with their comrades of the active army? They were intoxicated by military exploits, which the latter regarded simply as the performance of their duty, and they were inclined to look down on the professional officer, who was usually their inferior in respect of education, and was now, in time of peace toiling away at the tricks of the barrack square.

Yet any one who, like Theodore von Bernhardi, had preserved an impartial

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, II.

judgment on matters of military history was brought to quite a different conclusion. In an essay written in the year 1860,[1] he sounds an impressive warning against expecting too much from the nobler, more idealistic impulses of humanity, which may exercise valuable influence at moments of enthusiasm, but should not be reckoned upon as a constant factor in connection with permanent institutions. He contests the traditional theory concerning the decisive importance of the Landwehr in the War of Liberation. "The nation in arms," he writes, "constitutes the Prussian army. The standing army is the military training school for the whole male youth of the nation; but it is not merely that; it is far more. It is the strong framework, well prepared in advance, into which, should war call our colours into the field, the armed youth of the nation is to be inserted. . . . It seems really necessary to recall these things to the memory, because it is quite a common thing to hear people talk as though a quite vaguely conceived and formless crowd of men who have been drilled at some time or other and for some period or other of their lives, could be transformed forthwith into an army."

[1] Leipzig. S. Hirzel.

Advocates of a Militia

This strange theory did not take shape gradually during the long years of peace; it made its appearance directly after—and even during the actual course of—the Wars of Liberation. It was derived from the French Revolution and its intellectual forerunners. By the German doctrinaires also the people in arms was deemed the ideal foundation for the army. The issue of the war, for which the blunders of the Coalition were in fact responsible, appeared to them a proof that cowardly mercenaries were powerless when opposed to the heroic champions of freedom. Hardly had the allied armies, in 1814, shattered the power of Napoleon in France, when the *Rheinische Merkur* launched the most virulent abuse against standing armies, despite the fact that it was the standing armies who had just led the march into Paris. "Henceforth the only standing army must be the chivalry of the nation, all those who feel within themselves the courage, the strength and the vocation to serve their country as a shield for defence and a sword for attack, all those who have been vouchsafed the gift of vigorous and manly strength. This army

must be the supreme school of military art, the stronghold and refuge of the people, the defender and the crowning glory of their prince." [1]

In a pamphlet dated 1814, Professor Fries, of Heidelberg, appealed for " an arming of the people in place of the old, mendicant system." " Rid yourselves," he exclaims, " of the burden of the standing armies. Their maintenance has been a needless drain upon the finances of the State." He looked upon the standing armies merely as schools of immorality, though he made an exception in favour of the engineers and artillery, in whose case art and science were cultivated even in time of peace.

Welcker, of Giessen, demanded that " the standing army, that moral and physical curse of nations, should give place almost entirely to the freedom-and-life-breathing force of the Landwehr." The journal *Nemesis* described standing armies in 1815 as " a burden on the States."

Of far greater importance than these random effusions was the attitude taken by

[1] This and the following are quoted from Pinkow: *Der Literarische und Parlamentarische Kampf gegen die Institution des stehenden Heeres in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des* 19 *Jahrhunderts. Inaugural-Dissertation.* Berlin, 1912.

Professor Karl von Rotteck, of Freiburg. The esteem which he enjoyed in middle-class circles was considerable. It was based on his *History of the World*, which began to appear in the year 1812, a book, as Treitschke says,[1] full of self-complacent triviality, "betraying complete ignorance of the necessary development of historical events. Rotteck exhibits at once that barren rationalism which characterised the historical writers of the preceding century and that violent party feeling which marked the new epoch. He viewed the state on principle only from below, with the eyes of the governed—it was indeed the only aspect in which he knew it. It never occurred to him to question what aspect human affairs might wear when looked at from above, or what ideas might determine the conduct of the ruling classes, and what obstacles they might have to overcome. . . .

"The whole bitterness of liberalism found vent in a work by Rotteck published in 1816 and entitled *Concerning Standing Armies and National Militia* ('Ueber stehende Heere und Nationalmiliz'). What a contrast to Rühle von Liliernstern's patriotic book *On War* ('Vom Kriege')!

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, II.

The Prussian officer considered with statesmanlike moderation how the armies might be nationalised and the nations militarised; Rotteck, the partisan, presents us immediately with his radical alternative: Do we intend, he says, to convert the nation into an army or to convert the soldiers into citizens? That, he declares, is the great question at this critical hour! He attacks the Prussian Army Law with fanatical fury, and, scarcely a year after the regular army and the Landwehr had co-operated so gloriously at Belle Alliance, he has the effrontery to assert: 'Any State which relies upon a standing army as its source of strength, will inevitably cease to maintain a powerful Landwehr.' He describes the standing army as the pillar of despotism. He maintains: 'If all the youth of a nation are called to the army, then the whole people will be infected with the sentiments of the hireling.' Finally, he bluntly demands that the standing armies shall be abolished, and that in peace time only a small hired force shall be maintained, while the Landwehr is to receive a meagre training of a few weeks' duration. While indulging in this radical claptrap, he at the same time demands, with ingenuous egotism, that the system of substitution shall be introduced into his Landwehr.

Whole classes—and students in particular—are to be exempted from service."

Even in Prussia opinions were divided in regard to the Army Law of 1814. Treitschke writes [1] in regard to this : " Even the high officials had been by no means completely convinced by Boyen's eloquence. Bülow and Beyme openly advocated a reversion to the old army organisation, and others, without distinction of party, brought forward ingenuous schemes with a view to the relief of the upper classes. Schuckmann thought that there could be no question that a young man of education might be trained to be an efficient infantry soldier in six weeks at the outside. Solms-Laubach recommended that the students of Bonn and Düsseldorf should merely be called upon to attend occasional drills on Sundays. Schön looked down with philosophic disdain upon the parade-ground tricks of the craftsmen of war. He proposed that all the officers of the Landwehr, up to the colonels, should be elected by the provincial diets, and he considered that three-days' training a year was quite sufficient military education for a volunteer. From this it may be seen to what an extent even the statesmen of that time had become infected with that contempt

[1] *loc. cit.*

for a rigorous military training which breathes from the pages of Rotteck's works. Of the notable publicists of Prussia, scarcely one showed any understanding of the indispensable conditions for an efficient army organisation. Even the shrewd Rhenish patriot, Benzenberg, writing to his patron Gneisenau, remarked casually that the nation had discovered at Belle Alliance how unnecessary was all the torture of the barrack square. Arndt proposed in time of peace to make shift as far as possible with merely a permanent General Staff; the Landwehr would do the rest. The no less patriotic author of the widely read work *Preussen über alles wenn es will* ('Prussia over all, if she will') also maintained in 1817 that a standing army was superfluous; he thought that a Landwehr maintained by the parishes would meet all the requirements. The particularists also, who were enthusiastically in favour of the allotment of the taxes, tried to exploit the national army for their purposes, and recommended the formation of ten independent Landwehr corps under the control of the provincial diets."

If even in Prussia, with her proud memories of the War of Liberation, where it ought to have been clear to every man of ordinary intelligence that the very life of the State

depended on the maintenance of a strong army, such views could find adherents, it is not to be wondered at that in South Germany they fell upon fruitful soil. The paltry army administration of the Bund, and the insignificance of the standing contingents of troops, did not favour the development of a sound, soldierly point of view. In the blissful interval of peace even the Landwehr organisation degenerated, and the theory gained ground more and more that expenditure for military purposes was not worth while. The influence of this theory persisted for a long time. The democratic leaning of the Chambers was always opposed to the sound development of the military organisation in the South German states. There, as in Austria, the cultured and well-to-do classes could escape the liability to service. From motives of economy, the term of service with the colours had been reduced to little more than a year for the infantry; only in the case of the cavalry and the artillery was it rather longer. The weakness of the peace cadres rendered a really thorough military training out of the question. No great manœuvres were held. The consequence was that the army, with which South Germany encountered Prussia in 1866 was wholly inadequate. Since the

Prussian command was well aware of this fact, the main army at that time was allowed to remain comparatively weak, thus making it possible to concentrate all the greater strength upon the decisive theatre of war in Bohemia.

In Prussia those misguided theories concerning the military organisation which we encounter directly after the War of Liberation gained currency once again owing to the general sense of disillusionment which marked the first years of peace. That ill-humour engendered by the current of reaction, and nourished by the persecutions of the demagogues, contributed not a little to cloud men's judgment in regard to the army. Further, this hostility to the army became more pronounced as a result of the tendency in the direction of review tactics which had found its way into the army owing to the marked predominance of barrack-square drill. This tendency was by no means, as has generally been supposed, of old Prussian origin; it was a result of the intimate association with the Russian troops, with whom it had been an established custom since the time of the Tsar Paul. In the manœuvres the warlike gave place more and more to the spectacular. These aberrations in the training of the Prussian army at that time furnished the democrats with a pretext

for declaring that training by means of drill was altogether harmful and unnecessary. They were blind to the fact that, as a means to an end, as the foundation of discipline, it was as indispensable then as it is now. Schiller's words, "The soldier must be conscious of his own worth," had no meaning for them. The army gradually rid itself of this dangerous tendency to ceremonial, a result the credit for which is chiefly due to Prince Frederick Paul, whose inspiring influence made itself felt in the 'fifties of the nineteenth century. He made it his aim above all to develop the full manly worth of every individual soldier for military purposes, though at the same time insisting upon the necessity of a certain stiffness of bearing, for, as he said, the outward appearance of the troop should be "proud and distinguished." At this time there was born in the Prussian army the spirit which helped to bring about the achievements of 1864, 1866 and 1870–71. It is true that, at the beginning of the last century, the zealous opponents of standing armies were to a certain extent justified, if they based their objections upon the prevalence of barrack-square drill in Prussia, but they judged what was merely a regrettable by-product as though it were the thing itself.

The July Revolution of 1830 had given fresh encouragement to the theories of a militia army, and finally, about the year 1848, these theories came conspicuously to the front. The troubled condition of the time produced the most amazing fruits. "Behind all the chaos of words, it is possible to trace the desire for an armed force which should be in all respects adequate, and at the same time to perceive the incompetence of the army administration of the Bund. In consequence of the dangers threatening upon all sides, and the military preparations of the neighbouring states, the demand for a strengthening of the armed force became more and more insistent. It was proposed that the whole nation should be armed, and it was suggested that, by a reduction of the standing troops and the institution of an armed nation (though the latter was only to be assembled in case of need), economies might be effected, more especially in regard to the officers' corps, since almost all the proposals put forward provided for a diminution of the latter and a partial replacement by volunteer officers. It was believed that the nation itself could furnish a means of defence at once cheaper and more effectual. The military spirit was to be replaced by enthusiasm; every one was to bear arms, but

only for quite a short period—six months at the most. The army was to be made up of the whole mass of the people. The commanders were to be chosen by those whom they were to command. The citizen army was the ideal." [1] This assertion of the right to choose the officers is constantly repeated, and is sometimes even extended to cover the Commander-in-Chief. The officers were to be elected by the whole mass of those whom they were destined to command, upon the suggestions of trusted representatives of the men. Moreover every unit, even the smallest, was to be self-governing. We may perceive here a foreshadowing of the soldiers' committees of the recent Russian Revolution with their far-reaching prerogatives.

The same demands which were put forward in pamphlets and in the Press also make their appearance in the deliberations of the Frankfort Parliament. The abolition of the standing army was demanded by the Left of the House in resounding phrases, which, however, betrayed a complete ignorance of the factors which control international relations as well as of what was actually feasible under the existing circumstances. The extent of this mental confusion may be

[1] Pinkow, *loc. cit.*, pp. 71-2.

gathered from a speech of Robert Blum. He recommended that we should not summarily reject the hand held out to us by our western neighbour, and he continued: "You will perhaps reply that, at the very moment when the French were assuring us of their brotherly sentiments, 300 battalions of mobile national guard had been formed, which stood armed and ready to take the field at any moment. . . . Go to them! Ask them upon what terms they propose to offer us the hand of brotherhood! Offer them your hand! By so doing you will disperse the 300 battalions, and you will free the neighbour-state from the heavy burden of their maintenance." [1] Who can fail to be reminded by this of many recent proposals?

In vain did General von Radowitz insist at Frankfort that armed men were not armies; in vain did he warn the advocates of a militia army against generalising from the examples of La Vendée, Spain and the Tyrol, and applying these to warfare on a large scale. The General laid stress upon the special circumstances which had accompanied these popular risings. It seems not out of place to give a brief summary of them here.

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 88.

CHAPTER VII

POPULAR RISINGS

La Vendée

The revolt of La Vendée broke out in 1793, when the Convention, by the *levée en masse*,[1] began to enforce military service upon the youth of the country. Prior to this, the measures taken against the clergy and the execution of Louis XIV had already roused the greatest excitement among the Vendéans, who were thoroughly loyal to their king. If they succeeded in prolonging their resistance up to the beginning of the year 1796, it ought to be remembered that the first rising only encountered very insignificant republican garrisons, and that of the armies of the Republic, which were in any case very effective, for a long time only second-rate troops were employed against La Vendée. These divisions proved to be badly trained, lacking in mobility, and, until Hoche took the command in the year 1795,

[1] *See* p. 50.

badly led. Also the scene of the conflict was very much to the advantage of the rebels. The undulating hill-country, with its network of hedges and its numerous scattered farms and woods, was particularly favourable for mob-warfare. Commanded by energetic men, the Vendéans, who for a time could reckon as many as 40,000 armed men in the field, occasionally even took the offensive, but they were never able to maintain for long the advantages they had gained. The peasants dispersed after every victory, and there was no co-operation between their leaders. Hence this stronghold of royalism was compelled finally to succumb to superior numbers, and all the sacrifices of the civil war which had been waged with so much bitterness were in vain.

The Spanish Revolt against Napoleon

The long and successful resistance of Spain to Napoleon was only rendered possible by the fact that the disorderly troops of the Spanish militia were strongly reinforced by an English army, which, though small, was not only brave, but also employed with very skilful generalship by Wellington. The Spanish did, to be sure, even before they

received the assistance of the English troops, achieve one isolated success of some importance, comparable with that of the Americans at Saratoga,[1] but even here the attendant circumstances have to be borne in mind. At Baylen, in the Sierra Morena, on the 22nd of July 1808, General Dupont, with a force of 8290 famished and exhausted men, who had suffered severely from the burning heat and lack of water, surrendered to a far superior force of the Spanish insurgents, which had surrounded him. Dupont was guilty of the imprudence of including in the capitulation a division numbering 9600 men which was following him under General Wedel.[2] The result was, that the number of French prisoners of war was raised to nearly 18,000 men, and also that the victory won by the Spanish militia over a corps of the dreaded and hitherto invincible Napoleonic army was correspondingly enhanced. This

[1] *See* p. 43.

[2] Wedel fell in with this condition, although the possibility of retreat lay open to him, chiefly for the reason that he did not wish to expose Dupont's troops, who had already been taken prisoner, to the revenge of the Spaniards. Wedel's troops were to give up their arms, but were to receive them back again at the time of their stipulated embarkation for France. The Spanish violated this agreement and detained Wedel's troops also as prisoners of war.

event strengthened the resistance in the whole country, and raised the hope of a Europe groaning under the yoke of Napoleon. The French evacuated Madrid and retreated behind the Ebro. The event in itself, considered from a military standpoint, is not an exploit of conspicuous heroism on the part of the Spanish militia, for the troops concerned in the surrender, like almost all the French forces available in Spain at that time, were dépôt troops of inferior quality, that is to say, recruits who had received a superficial training, and had then been hurriedly put together into extemporised units. The *Grande Armée* was still in North Germany. Napoleon brought strong contingents of it to Spain in the autumn of 1808, and, after his forces had been raised to more than 200,000 men, scattered the Spanish troops and pressed forward by way of Madrid. His hope that the country would now settle down was, however, not fulfilled. The apparent calm of the Spanish provinces was deceptive. It was enforced by the powerful French army, with the dreaded Emperor at its head. But every diminution of the French forces gave new life to the national revolt. Napoleon's troops spent themselves for five years in an exhausting

guerilla conflict, a form of warfare for which the mountainous country, with its bad roads and its strong and numerous monasteries, was very well adapted.

The course of the war in Spain, like that in La Vendée, only on a larger scale, demonstrates that, for the purpose of crushing a national revolt, a very strong armed force is required. None the less, it was reserved for Wellington to drive the French out of Spain. The Spanish alone could never have done more than oppose a passive resistance; they would never have achieved a victory in the true sense of the word. Hence the national levy proved itself incapable of really defending the country against the invader. Moreover, both in La Vendée and in Spain, there were spiritual motives which stimulated the resistance of the nation. The nation had been most deeply wounded in its religious susceptibilities, and spurred on, and to some extent led, by the priests, it rose up against the invader, whose acts of oppression and barbarity had stirred up fresh hatred against him. In the Tyrol, the resistance was further strengthened by that loyalty to the dynasty which is characteristic of the German.

The Tyrol, 1809

When Austria opened operations on the Danube, in April 1809, the carefully prepared insurrection broke out all over the Tyrol. It took the Bavarian officials and troops completely by surprise. The revolted peasants overcame the weak and scattered Bavarian garrisons, as well as two French brigades which were marching through from Italy to South Germany; and the liberation of the country was secured in the space of four days. An Austrian division marched from Villach to the Tyrol, and gave additional support to the Landsturm companies. At the end of April, two Bavarian divisions advanced from Salzburg to the Inntal. On the 19th May, Innsbrück was occupied after several battles. When, soon after, one of the Bavarian divisions withdrew, Andreas Hofer, with an Austrian force of no more than 900 men with five guns, succeeded, on the 29th of May, at the mountain of Isel, near Innsbrück, in inflicting a severe defeat on the only Bavarian division which still remained in the country. No less than 18,000 peasants had been called up. After the Battle of Wagram, Napoleon brought up an army of 50,000 men against the Tyrolese,

who were now thrown completely on their own resources. At the same time eight columns advanced from all sides against the mountain fortress and brought the northern Tyrol into subjection. Nevertheless, Andreas Hofer succeeded in securing temporary possession of Innsbrück once again. Only when he was attacked from the south also, by way of Trient, did he finally succumb.

Twice had the country freed itself practically by its own efforts. None the less, we encounter the same phenomenon here as in La Vendée. The popular levy was incapable of following up the local success beyond the frontiers of the country. The attempts to advance into Upper Bavaria against the French communications had no success worth mentioning. Speckbacher, one of the Tyrolese leaders, declared later: "We peasants had dauntless hearts, but no order; with our imperial troops it was the other way round; but the troops of Blücher and Yorck had both—order and dauntless hearts; that is what I should have liked to see." [1] These words of the brave leader of the peasants put the inadequate performances of a mere militia in the right light, and, on the other hand, show that a trained national army is

[1] Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, II.

the best defensive force. The national wars in Spain and in the Tyrol did indeed act like a signal for the revolt of the nations against Napoleon; they kept the ideal of the liberation of the Fatherland before the eyes of German patriots. Hence it is not surprising that the achievements of the popular levies of both countries were very much exaggerated.

It was forgotten that the contest for a revolted mountainous country has always demanded very strong forces on the side of the aggressor. For instance, in the year 1878, Austria-Hungary sent 75,000 men to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 55,000 of whom came from the Save and 20,000 from the Dalmatian coast. As soon as it became clear that the occupation would not be effected without a severe struggle, an order was given for the mobilisation of a further three-and-a-half divisions to protect the advancing columns in the rear. Subsequently it proved necessary to bring up a further 50,000 men, in order to effect the occupation. The effectiveness of modern weapons would have altered these conditions to a large extent. It would be almost impossible for a mere popular levy to keep up a resistance for any length of time if it were faced with a superiority in respect of howitzer artillery and

numerous machine-guns. For instance, in Serbia, in the autumn of 1915, though we were opposed by an organised Serbian army, the fact that we were equipped with more effective weapons made it very much easier for us and our allies to penetrate into the mountainous country.

In the Tyrol and in Bosnia, the population who had been furnished with fire-arms, were contending for their native soil, in the case of Bosnia, intermixed with regular Turkish battalions, but in spite of their superior numbers, they were finally vanquished by the invader. As to what would happen if the case were reversed—that is to say, if it were attempted to invade a mountainous country with a militia army—we may gain some idea from the conduct of Garibaldi's volunteer bands in the year 1866.

These assembled to the number of from 35,000 to 40,000 men at Brescia and in the north for the conquest of the Southern Tyrol. For the defence of the latter only 11,000 soldiers and 4000 local riflemen were available, under the command of Major-General (later Master of Ordnance) Baron von Kuhn. On the 16th of July, some of Kuhn's troops advanced into the Chiesetal and up the adjacent heights against the main body of

Garibaldi's army. A few Austrian companies were sufficient to throw these into confusion. They withdrew, after having sustained quite trifling losses, with eight times their number of prisoners. A second blow delivered on the 21st of July, north-west of the Garda Lake, with stronger forces, was equally successful. The intention of intimidating and paralysing the volunteer bands, so as to gain a free hand in another direction, was completely fulfilled. These inefficient Italian troops proved completely unequal to mountain warfare.

The Boers

The vast extent of the South African veldt presents a theatre of war of an entirely different character from that of La Vendée, Spain, the Tyrol, or Bosnia. The Boer militia, however, exhibited the same deficiencies as those which marked the popular levies engaged in the above-mentioned European theatres of war. On this subject General von Beseler writes : [1] " Just as their leaders, after brilliant beginnings, suddenly broke down, so the Boer army itself, in the further course of the war, proved unequal to its task. The experiences which Wash-

[1] *loc. cit.*

ington had had with his militia army were repeated. The Boers, too, for all their splendid warlike spirit and presence of mind, were lacking in that discipline which alone renders an army permanently capable of great successes, and keeps it together even under misfortune. With the Boers, too, it was not an unusual occurrence for them to abandon their detachment without asking permission, in order to go and see if all was well at their farm at home; and the authority of their self-elected officers was as inadequate to check such disorders, as it was to force their troops—dauntless and willing though they were for the most part—to do anything in the course of the fighting which might seem to them to be superfluous. It is to these moral qualities of the Boer army alone—apart from the palpable blunders of the higher command—that their ultimate failure is to be attributed. . . . Subsequently the conflict degenerated to an exhausting, uneventful irregular warfare, the only parallel to which in recent history is furnished by the thankless campaign of the French in Spain. It proves incontrovertibly that even the best militia in the world, composed of an indigenous population animated by a genuinely warlike spirit, is not adapted for

a resolute conduct of war. . . . If any one should object here that the well-trained English armies were incapable of doing anything rightly even against the diminished militia troops, it should be remembered that the failure of the British in North America, and their dubious successes in South Africa, were due not only to the arms of their opponents, but that other factors, moral, political and local, also entered in. The North American War of Independence has been described not without justice as a war rather of ideas than of arms, and the course of the Boer War was governed as much by the incalculable influence of the ground and the climate as by the decision of arms."

The Polish Rising of 1830–31

The first half of the last century witnessed yet another popular rising of considerable proportions upon European soil, namely, the Polish insurrection of 1830–31. This, however, cannot be adduced in favour of militia troops. The rising of Poland against Nicholas I began with the defection of the regular Polish army, and it was only because such an army, and moreover an exceedingly well-trained army, was available, that Russia

had so much trouble in overcoming the insurrection. The Polish army numbered 35,000 men, and, moreover, since the Poles had furnished a considerable contingent to Napoleon's army, there was further available in the country a considerable number of discharged officers and older discharged soldiers. Hence the strength of the army could be increased forthwith by as many as 20,000 men. Moreover, owing to the number of cadres which were available, it was possible to enlist by degrees a further 45,000 men in so-called territorial regiments. These new formations, as usual, proved to be of very little value, but they were strongly supported by the old troops. They were further supplemented by 8000 men of the volunteer regiments known as *Krakusen*. If the Polish army had been better led, and if it had not been for dissension among those in charge of the administration, Russia would have found in the Poles, whose bravery was conspicuous, an even more dangerous antagonist. The chief deficiency of the newly formed regiments was in respect to their officers' corps. It might have been expected that recourse would have been had for the latter to veteran non-commissioned officers; but in spite of the desperate situation of the

nation, which was fighting for its existence, this was not done. The officers' posts were conferred upon the lower aristocracy, the Schlachta, and consequently it frequently happened that quite incompetent men occupied high positions in the army. It has to be added that all these young men, who constituted the bulk of the new officers' corps, belonged to the radical wing of the revolutionary party, and, for all their military incapacity, exhibited an unexampled insolence. These officers did not scruple to criticise openly their superior officers. Such men, who were more lavish with words than with deeds, invariably tended to lower discipline. The Polish Government by no means turned to the best account the excellent military forces which it had at its disposition, and to a certain extent put them in the field in the shape of inferior troops, when there was really no necessity for this.

When the Polish insurrection broke out, the quarters of the Russian army were very widely dispersed over the vast Empire. Hence it arose that only very inadequate forces could be despatched for the subjugation of the extensive revolted territory. Only 170,000 men all told were allotted to Field-Marshal Prince Diebitsch Of these

only 130,000 were available in the first instance, and the Polish frontier was crossed on February 5th, 1831, with only 100,000 men. Owing to a sudden thaw, it was necessary to abandon the original plan of campaign. Instead of advancing from the Narew-Bug against Warsaw, in the hope of driving considerable contingents of the Poles from the capital, it was necessary to consume a considerable time in effecting a movement to the left, with Brest-Litowsk as base. When Diebitsch finally advanced towards the Vistula from a due easterly direction, he arrived at the latter with no more than 70,000 men, so that his force was no longer superior to the Polish field army of 60,000 men, supported by the fortified line of the river. The climatic conditions of the seat of war and the traditional incompetence of the Russian commissariat were further instrumental in protracting the war, until finally, on the 7th of September 1831, after the Russian army had received substantial reinforcements, Field-Marshal Paskievitsch succeeded in taking Warsaw by storm. A month later the last attempt at armed resistance in the whole country was suppressed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NORTH AMERICANS IN THE CIVIL WAR OF 1861–65

Composition of the Armies

In the North American War of Secession, the confederation of the Southern States, with a population of only 12,000,000, was opposed to the Union, with a population of 19,000,000. Since, however, from the 12,000,000 of the South, about 4,000,000 of negroes have to be deducted, the North possessed from the outset an overwhelming advantage, which was further enhanced by the fact that the population of the South was scattered over a very much wider extent of territory, so that it was very much more difficult to bring it into operation, as well as by the fact that there was a brisk and continuous immigration from Europe to the North such as did not exist in the South. Moreover, since in the western theatre of war, the North, apart from a few isolated reverses, made slow but continuous progress,

and only in the east, in Virginia, failed up to the very end to achieve any success, the South was very soon at an even greater disadvantage in respect of numbers as compared with the North, and the decisive contest was fought with five as opposed to twenty millions.

In addition to a larger population, the North had at its command quite different material resources, and, above all, a sea-power which was constantly increasing, and without which the war could not have been decided in its favour. The fleet of the Northern States not only rendered important assistance in the operations on land, but, above all, by blockading the ports of the Southern States, it prevented the cotton export to Europe, which was the main source of revenue of the Southern States, and at the same time rendered the import of war material from Europe very much more difficult.

The fact that, in spite of these unfavourable circumstances, the South not only kept up a resistance for years, but even at times seemed as if it would emerge victoriously from the conflict, was due in the first place to the undoubted superiority of its human material. On both sides the militia of the

various States constituted the primary armed force which was in some degree organised and ready. In addition to these, and to some extent completing them, were the so-called volunteer contingents, which the central authorities compelled the various States to raise at the beginning of the war. The central authorities enlisted these volunteer contingents directly into their service, so that they formed a kind of regular army as opposed to the local militias. The Southern States were very soon under the necessity of resorting to universal military service. In the South, the hierarchical organisation of the newly formed armies was very much facilitated by the existing class distinctions within the population. The ruling classes filled the positions of officers. Consequently the South did not suffer from those disadvantages which, in the case of the North, arose from the choice of their officers by the men. The poorer classes of the white population formed the bulk of the soldiery of the Confederation, the negroes being employed only for labour service. The habits of an open-air life, together with their experience of hunting and of warfare with the Indians, had hardened the population of the South; the sons of the numerous farmers

of the country furnished excellent material for troops of cavalry thoroughly trained and mounted on blood-horses. The war roused the natural inclination of such a population for daring exploits, and favoured by the character of the country, the Confederate partisans did successfully achieve many such exploits. Since it had been necessary to enlist 40,000 volunteers for the Mexican War, and since these volunteers belonged almost without exception to the Southern States, at the very outset the Confederation had at its disposal a considerable number of men with experience of war and a corresponding number of officers. Moreover, of the officers of the regular army of the Union, which numbered only 14,000 men, a comparatively large number both of those still in the service and of those who had retired belonged to the Southern States. By far the greater number of these pledged themselves to the cause of their native state. They had all received a good military training at the military college at West Point.

The armies of the North also developed soldierly qualities, but only gradually and in the course of the war itself. The North had set to work on the preparation of its armaments later than the South, since a

certain number of the Southern States had been for a long time aiming at a rupture. Hence, since the Northern armies were in no way prepared beforehand, it was only gradually that their efforts could be crowned with success. When the secession became an actual fact, President Lincoln not only called up the militia, and entrusted them with the defence of Washington, the Federal capital, which was situated near the borders of the Southern States, but he also gave orders for the levy of a volunteer army of 75,000 men. The regular army was increased to 23,000 men, and as soon as it became clear that, in view of the gravity of the situation, a three-months' term of service, such as had originally been provided for the volunteer contingents, was not sufficient, the States were called upon to furnish 500,000 men, with an obligation partly to two years' and partly to three years' service. Although in adopting these measures the North was having recourse to pure improvisations, none the less they furnished the ingredients for the gradual creation of a force which should be in the nature of a standing army. Moreover the danger that the secession would be successful and the serious threat presented to the

territory of the Northern States roused the population of the North to a more active participation in the war; and the fact that many industries had been ruined by the war was favourable to the enlistment of volunteers; so that the North soon became superior to the South in respect to the number of its fighting forces, though not in respect to their quality. Both among leaders and men the town-bred element was preponderant, and hence they proved very ill adapted for the exertions and privations of the campaign. Only in the west was the human material of both the conflicting parties approximately equal in value. At the beginning of the war, the bulk of the officers of the Northern States not only lacked any previous military training, but also they were deficient in that natural authority which belonged to the propertied classes of the South. In the North men who lacked any soldierly training or talent occupied even the higher positions in the army. The volunteers were enlisted by the aid of countless recruiting offices, which sprang up all over the country and made it into a business. Influential men, well-known politicians or political refugees from Europe of alleged military renown, raised regiments

and assumed the position of colonel of these with the sanction of the States concerned. The captains and lieutenants were elected by the men. Only the generals were nominated by the President. Frequently whole bodies of the Northern troops were composed of foreign immigrants—Germans, Irish, French. At the beginning, what the North chiefly needed was such a military organisation as could have given cohesion to the masses, for there was in fact an absolute lack of efficient cadres. Further, the administration was guilty of fraud and peculation on a large scale to the detriment of the army. Moreover, the task of the commanders of the troops was rendered very much more difficult by the fact that the Federal States neglected to replenish at the proper time formations which had already been created, and preferred to form new bodies of troops, in order that they might make a boast of the large number of their regiments, although as a result of the rapid wastage which always occurs in the case of such improvised armies, some of these regiments existed only in name.

Conduct of the Armies in the Field

For the purposes of comparison with European conditions, only the Eastern Virginian theatre of war comes into question. Here the first important encounter, at Bull Run, South of Washington, did not redound to the glory of either party concerned. About 30,000 men on the two sides engaged in the battle. At first the Union troops had the advantage. The ranks of the Confederates wavered seriously, until the unexpected appearance of a weak brigade and a battery on the right flank of their opponent resulted in the complete collapse of his whole line. Only a regular battalion and the cavalry made a stand in the midst of the general flight. Large numbers of the fugitives could not be brought to a halt on the southern shore of the Potomac; they overflowed Washington, some even fleeing as far as New York, 400 kilometres further, at the same time spreading through the country the wildest rumours of the treachery of their leaders. A swarm of Members of Congress, politicians, journalists and photographers, who had desired to witness the hoped-for defeat of the Confederates, found themselves involved in the general flight. The extent

of the defeat was by no means considerable in itself, for the battle had cost the Union troops in all only 1500 dead and wounded and 1400 missing; but the disgrace lay in the fact that these troops were not able to endure even such comparatively insignificant losses, that they had abandoned twenty-eight guns, and that they had furnished irresistible proof of their complete worthlessness. Such little discipline as had existed before now disappeared completely, a process which was assisted by the wrangling among the senior officers, who mutually attributed the blame to each other. Fortunately, the enemy forces, too, consisted only of new formations, and the battle had reduced these to such a state of exhaustion and disorder that they were completely incapable of following up the pursuit, although they had lost not more than 1700 men. With such weak forces and an equipment of guns which was inadequate, even for warfare in the open field, there could be no question of taking the strong fortifications which had been constructed for the defence of Washington, and behind which even the poorest troops could still offer a resistance.

Both armies exhibited the characteristic

qualities of a militia, but this was more conspicuous in the case of the troops of the Union. In the case of the Confederates, the skill and confidence of their generals saved them from the gravest of disasters and gave a favourable turn to a situation which seemed already lost. On the side of the Northern States, on the contrary, the Commander-General, McDowell, received very inadequate support from the subordinate command; dilettantism was conspicuous, and the army, with its quite insufficient training, was unequal to standing any serious test. Finally the Union awoke to the fact that no success could be attained with such troops as these, and they set to work to create the army which had been lacking in time of peace. If the Confederates had possessed the means for turning to account their success at Bull Run, the cause of the Union would have been lost. However, the state of terror which had prevailed at Washington subsided again, and preparations were set on foot for new armaments. At the end of 1861 the total fighting forces of the Union amounted already to 527,000 men. In addition to garrison troops to the number of 55,000 men, who were employed for the immediate defence of the Federal capital, General McClellan had

organised on the Potomac by the spring of 1862 a new field army of 158,000 men. His predecessor, McDowell, had already been violently attacked when he began to drill his troops. It was considered that this was a needless tyranny over the soldiers. When McClellan refused to advance forthwith against Richmond with his undisciplined hordes, but insisted that they must first have some training, even if it were only a very superficial one, he was suspected of being in favour of reconciliation with the South.

He decided to convey the army from Potomac in March 1862, by means of a large transport fleet, to the so-called Virginian Peninsula, and then to advance against Richmond. By this means he avoided several very difficult points at which the enemy might have confronted him if he had advanced by the direct route to Richmond. The adoption of this circuitous route by water was none the less not the outcome of any profound and wise strategy, but was chiefly due to an unwillingness to engage with the enemy in the open field with troops which had been insufficiently trained.

McClellan was really postponing the crisis, in the uncertain hope that, on the route he had

adopted, it might be attended with a smaller sacrifice. The fact that the military operations on the Peninsula dragged themselves out with excessive slowness was in accordance with the very nature of a newly formed army, and the slowness of its movements resulting from the inefficiency of the troops and the lack of effective co-operation between the leaders. The enterprise was a complete fiasco. Only the fact that it was supported by the fleet saved the Northern army from being annihilated by Lee, who had now assumed the command of the Confederates in Virginia.

The attacks upon the territory of the Northern States, which Lee undertook in 1862 and 1863, were, however, equally unsuccessful. In view of the relative strengths of the opponents, any invasion of the enemy's territory undertaken by the South could not in any case be more than an offensive with a limited objective. Moreover, the army of General Lee had to contend with still further disadvantages. Chief among these was their deficiency in respect of arms and equipment. A large proportion of their guns had had to be captured first from the enemy, and they were reduced to the necessity of utilising the supplies of clothing of the Union troops.

Moreover, in spite of the excellent material contained in the Confederate army of North Virginia, none the less in respect to its composition and spirit, it was nothing but a militia army, and was therefore unequal to the task of a prolonged offensive campaign in enemy territory.

In the home territory, on the other hand, Lee achieved several successes, both in defence and attack; and in 1863 he won a great victory. In the three-days' battle in the forest round Chancellorsville, he drove back the enemy over the frontier of Virginia. The battle opened favourably for the South, since the corps on the right wing of the Union army was unable to deploy to the right flank when it was attacked from that direction. It was driven back in wild flight. The Northern armies suffered up to the very end from serious moral defects. In 1864 Grant made an attempt to shatter Lee's army by uninterrupted "hammer blows" and to open the way for his own troops to Richmond. In spite of the fact that the numerical strength of his army was more than twofold that of the enemy, he did not succeed in doing this; and he left quite a third of his troops lying before the positions of the enemy. When Grant, with the aid

of the fleet, transferred the army to the southern bank of the James River, the "hammer blows" against the entrenchments of Richmond–Petersburg again proved in vain. A consideration of the very deficient striking force of his army induced President Lincoln, in spite of the fact that the Southern States were already completely enveloped, to attempt once more to effect a reconciliation. It was only owing to the unyielding attitude of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederation, that such a reconciliation did not take place.

Lee's army finally succumbed, in April 1865, not to the arms of the opponent, but to strangulation by the overwhelming superiority of the Union in the Western theatre of war. The River Mississippi had been in the hands of the Union since the summer of 1863, as a result of which the territory of the Confederation was cut in two. Following upon this, the successful operations of the Northern troops under General Sherman in the summer of 1864 and in the winter of 1864–5 severed also the communications of the Eastern States of the Confederation with the South. After four years of war, the so-called "Anaconda Plan" of the North was finally realised.

According to one estimation,[1] the war involved the sacrifice of 500,000 lives, and, without taking into account the cancelled assets of the South, a pecuniary expenditure on both sides of eleven milliard dollars, a high sum for that time and in consideration of the strength of the armies engaged. The war charges of France, in connection with the campaign of 1870–71, apart from the war indemnity of five milliard francs, are estimated at only four and a half million, that is to say, in all at only nine and a half million francs. In the North American Civil War, the armies of both sides furnished very striking evidence of the defects of a militia. It was chiefly the lack of an efficient fighting army which was responsible for the long duration of the struggle.

[1] Kaufmann, *Die Deutschen im Amerikanischen Bürgerkriege.* Munich und Berlin, 1911, p. 577.

CHAPTER IX

THE FRENCH ARMY FROM THE RESTORATION UNTIL 1871

From the Second Peace of Paris until 1870

Under the rule of the Bourbons conscription with substitution was retained. The distaste for the profession of arms increased more and more. In the period between 1815 and 1830 not more than 3000 men on the average came forward annually for voluntary enlistment. Of the conscripts an average of one in twenty-five deserted. The *Militär-Wochenblatt* of the 21st of June 1823 writes :[1] "The practice of substitution had a very prejudicial effect on recruiting, on the spirit of the army and on the morality of the nation. Speculators, for the most part ex-soldiers, combined to make a regular business out of the sale of men; they resorted to all kinds of abominable practices in order to induce young men to pledge themselves as substitutes for small sums of money, and these

[1] M. Jähns, *Das französische Heer von der grossen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart.* Leipzig, 1873.

were then put in the army in the place of wealthy conscripts, who had to pay these speculators from 4000 up to 6000 francs. Such companies or individuals had their offices, agents and correspondents in all the departments, and worked in close connection with the civil and military authorities. This trade in human beings was plied with special energy in Alsace and Lorraine."

These abuses induced General Morand, in 1829, to make a speech in the Chamber of Deputies in favour of universal military service. Another veteran of the Napoleonic wars, General Foy, coined the phrase "blood-tax" (*impôt du sang*) in its bad sense. He declared: "It is wrong to materialise a moral obligation, wrong to regard military service as the payment of a tax. But misappreciation of the ethical value of military service is only too apt to make its appearance where the obligation to service is not universal." [1]

Later, under Napoleon III, in the year 1855, the purchase of exemption was in so far regularised that the Government undertook the furnishing of a substitute in consideration of the payment of a definite sum (on the average 2500 francs). The money

[1] Jähns, *loc. cit.*

thus obtained was allotted to the Dotation Fund of the army. All those liable for service had to decide beforehand whether they wished to purchase exemption or not. Those who purchased exemption were released henceforward from any obligation to service. Those who pledged themselves for a prolongation of their term of service were paid fixed sums by the State according to the length of the prolongation. By this means, the State acquired a stock of professional soldiers, but paid for them with the disadvantage that a large number of soldiers of a low standard of morality were retained in the army, while the new recruits were drawn more and more exclusively from the proletariat. The French people insured themselves against enrolment in this mercenary army much as they might have insured themselves against an accident.

The July Revolution kindled new life in the National Guard. In a commission appointed to investigate the conditions of military service, the Prussian model came under discussion. Victor Cousin, the philosopher and academician, who was entrusted with the supervision of public education, was sent by the Government to Berlin, in order to study conditions in Prussia. "He

maintained," writes Jähns, [1] that universal compulsory education and universal compulsory military service were the chief elements in the power of the State; the former he judged to be a spiritual force and the latter a force for military education of the highest importance. The Duke of Orleans remarked at that time to a Prussian Staff Officer: "You are helped by your organisation; with you everything follows a soldierly and resolute procedure; that is what is lacking with us. The army is properly merely the vanguard of the nation, and I hope that we too shall arrive at this." But how could the king of the *bourgeoisie* have ventured to introduce universal military service, even if he had wished to do so? "Your organisation is perfect," remarked General Blancard to the same Prussian officer, "but we can never establish such an organisation, because it would involve a complete transformation of our manners, customs and laws." This transformation was only brought about as a result of the defeats of 1870–71, as formerly in Prussia it had been brought about by those of the year 1806.

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 317, quoting Cousin's essay, *De l'instruction publique dans quelques pays de l'Allemagne et particulièrement en Prusse.*

As a result of the frequent political revolutions which France had experienced since the first Peace of Paris, the army was inevitably drawn into the arena of politics. The army took part in the elections for the Chamber of Deputies, and among the members of the latter were a number of generals and senior officers. As the disturbance of the time increased, and as the lack of distinguished personalities became more and more conspicuous, the figure of Napoleon, glorified by legend, gained more and more hold on the popular imagination. And it was the liberal and republican circles, that is to say, men professing opinions which the Emperor had always fought against with the utmost rigour during his lifetime, and to which he had made concessions on his return from Elba only with great reluctance, who now felt called upon to lead the chorus of praise of the Napoleonic era.

These traditions were naturally restored to new life under the Second Empire. The fighting in Algiers had furnished the army with experience only of irregular warfare; the Crimean War for the first time gave it an opportunity of showing what it could accomplish on a large scale. The conduct of the army before Sevastopol was thoroughly

satisfactory, and renewed the ancient fame of French valour. To be sure, all kinds of moral defects and failures of organisation were conspicuously revealed. The increase of the French troops before Sevastopol from 30,000 to 100,000 and finally to 150,000 men, as well as the necessity of maintaining them at this strength and the heavy losses in dead, sick and wounded, resulted in a complete disorganisation of the regiments which remained at home. The increase of the annual levies of recruits did not really furnish an effective remedy, the more so since the leaders of the army in the Crimea required trained, older men, as the twenty-year-old recruits only filled the hospitals. It was resolved to guard the recurrence of these evils in the future by increasing the annual levy of recruits to 100,000 men. After deducting the unfit, those exempted on account of domestic circumstances, and the naval recruits, there remained as a matter of fact only 70,000 men. Of these the so-called *deuxième portion*, amounting to about 50,000 men, were discharged after a superficial training in the home country, and only 20,000 men were permanently enlisted. The very meagre figures of the army budget rendered a further augmentation of the

armed force out of the question. Taking into account the shrinkage resulting from death and other circumstances, it was still hoped that the *deuxième portion* might be counted on to furnish a reserve force of 320,000 men, although these had received only a very insufficient military training.

The French army which, in 1859, commenced operations in the theatre of war in Northern Italy numbered 108,000 men. Since the army in peace time numbered 380,000 men, in the case of further European complications, which for that time appeared imminent and which resulted in the mobilisation of Prussia and of the German federal corps, after deducting the garrison and dépôt troops, only a very limited number of troops would have remained for the defence of the Rhine frontier. It is true that 150,000 discharged soldiers were called up, but they obeyed the summons only very slowly and unwillingly, as they considered that they had been finally released from military duties, and in consequence of their defective training they did not by any means come up to the expectations which had been placed on them. The levy of recruits for the year 1859 was, to be sure, increased to 140,000 men, but these could not yet be employed

for service in the field. In a memoir of the 7th of February 1859, Moltke calculates that France could open a campaign against Germany with at the most 236,000 men, and that hence these would be confronted with a numerical superiority of from 100,000 to 150,000 men. From this it is clear how little the actual military strength of France at that time accorded with the aggressive policy pursued by Napoleon III. Since the French army could only be mobilised by degrees, the Emperor was very much dependent on the favourable development of the war in Italy, where he did, in fact, reap a success as considerable as it was undeserved.

He was not dazzled, however, by his victories in Italy, and was by no means blind to the numerous defects which adhered to the organisation of the French army. But his efforts to bring about an improvement were frustrated by the opposition on the one hand of the legislative bodies, on the other by the army itself, which would not hear of a short term of service. Hence no fundamental reform was effected. It was by no means the fault of the Government alone that France in 1870 opposed to the mighty array of the whole German armed force only a fraction of what the country

could have furnished if adequate exertions had been made. A considerable share of blame attaches to the National Assembly, as it does to any parliament which, in order to win the favour of the electors, closes its ears to the incontestable truth once expressed by the great Napoleon when he said that it is possible to win a battle with a minority, but not to win a campaign. For the latter big battalions are essential.

As a result of the victories of Prussia in the year 1866, the Minister of War, Marshal Niel, laid before the parliament a proposal for the introduction of universal military service. He did not, however, carry his point, and obtained, in 1868, only improvements on the basis of the existing organisation which still admitted substitutions. The term of service was fixed at five years with the colours and four years with the reserves. The army was to consist of (1) volunteer recruits, (2) volunteers for a prolonged term of service (as substitutes), and (3) conscripts determined by lot; and was to be brought up to a strength of 400,000 men, to be increased in case of war to 800,000 men by the addition of the reserves. The *garde nationale mobile*, with its 400,000 men, was to constitute an auxiliary force. The latter embraced those

of the same annual classes as formed the standing army and the reserve who had either not been drawn for service as conscript or who had been replaced by substitutes. The reserve, however, could not be brought to a strength of 400,000 men until after the lapse of five or six years, and the *garde mobile* could only arrive at its full strength after nine years. On the whole it may be said to have existed only on paper, since it was only to be called up fifteen times in the year, and then never for more than one day. The putting into execution of Niel's proposed reforms would thus in any case have taken a considerable time, and they were still under discussion, when, after the death of Niel in the year 1869, Le Bœuf was appointed Minister of War. In order to please the Chamber, which was clamouring for economies, Le Bœuf—who was very intent upon winning the public favour—agreed to a reduction of the annual contingent of recruits by 10,000 men and to other deductions from the army budget. Thus the French drifted towards the War of 1870, without having effected any fundamental changes.

The War of 1870–71

It is sufficiently well-known in what a state of unpreparedness the Imperial French army assembled at the frontier in 1870 and what were the consequences of this for the troops. In spite of these disadvantages, as well as of the defective organisation of the commissariat, the lack of confident generalship and the fact of its numerical inferiority, the Imperial army made a very brave fight in the August battles, and streams of German blood had to be shed before it was vanquished. The fact that this was the case testifies to the valour of the troops. It was essentially an army of professional soldiers which here encountered the German national army: an army which betrayed numerous weaknesses, but which was inspired by a lofty sense of honour. Even the army of Chalons, in spite of its loose construction and hesitating leadership, preserved its military honour at Sedan up to the last.

The fact that, even after Sedan, the French nation still did not despair of the salvation of the Fatherland will always redound to its honour, although the attempt to repel the German invasion by a national levy on a very large scale was not successful, and

indeed could not have been successful in view of the inefficiency of the improvised troops.

The first steps towards the creation of new armed forces had already been taken under the Empire, when the reservists were reinforced from the dépôts of the regiments, and were formed into marching-units.

Subsequently, all the unmarried men and childless widowers belonging to the so-called *deuxièmes portions* of the annual classes for 1865 to 1868, as well as the annual class for 1870 and the *garde nationale mobile*, were called up. The "National Defence Government," which entered on its activities upon the Proclamation of the Republic on the 4th September 1870, in addition to the above, formed companies out of the stationary national guard, that is to say, men of 30 to 40 years of age, who received the name *garde nationale mobilisée*. In the latter all the unmarried men and childless widowers between 21 and 40 years of age, who had not already been placed elsewhere, were forced to enroll themselves. At the beginning of November, the liability for service was extended to married men and widowers with children, who received the name *deuxième ban*. Therewith universal compulsory service

became an actual fact. It was born in France from the necessity of the moment, just as it was in Prussia in 1813.

The organisation of the army which was entrusted with the defence of the capital made comparatively rapid progress. The nucleus of the Paris army was composed of the XIIIth Army Corps, which, by a timely retreat from Mézières had escaped the capitulation of Sedan, and a newly formed XIVth Army Corps; both these being reinforced by dépôt troops. By the addition of further formations from the regular army, the National Guard and the volunteer corps, the total armed force available in Paris finally attained a strength of 400,000 men. The organisation of the resistance in the provinces was only roused to genuine activity when Gambetta entered Tours from Paris, by balloon, on the 9th of October. As his colleague in the dictatorship, which he exercised as Minister both of the Interior and of War, he elected Freycinet, the civil engineer.

Arthur Chuquet [1] says of the latter that on the whole he was adapted for his difficult task at that time, but he adds: "As a result of his overweening self-confidence, he was satisfied with any expedient; he never saw

[1] *La Guerre 1870–71*, pp. 167–8. Paris, 1898.

any difficulties. Thus he imagined that he could direct military operations from his cabinet, he treated experienced and highly patriotic generals in an off-hand manner, giving them his orders and regarding himself as under a special obligation to bring them to their senses. He demanded of the troops the same mobility as was possessed by the German army, and he could not understand that a newly formed, untrained army is necessarily incapable of executing movements quickly, as well as of withstanding the inclemencies of the weather and of gaining the victory over experienced, disciplined and trained troops.

"Gambetta shared the illusions of his colleague. He considered that the conduct of war was the task of the civilian, and he surrounded himself with engineers, scholars and journalists. After Wörth and Sedan he was at one with the whole French nation in the conviction that professional soldiers were short-sighted, incapable people, fit at the most to put into execution the brilliant plans of those wiser than themselves. He fancied that in Freycinet he had discovered a second Carnot, and that with his aid the legendary achievements of 1792 and 1793 might be repeated, while at the same time he broke

with all traditions. In this Gambetta overlooked the fact that it was chiefly the volunteers of the First Republic who, by their cowardice and insubordination, were responsible for the failures of the Revolutionary army, and that the Republic was saved at that time not by the heroism of its troops, but by the lack of unity within the Coalition; that the Germans of 1793, irresolute and few in number, only penetrated a few miles beyond the frontier, while the Germans of 1870, strong, victorious and united, had not stopped short at the Sauer and the Scheldt, but had reached the Seine and the Loire, that is to say, the heart of our country."

None the less Gambetta was the very soul of the defence of the provinces. It was due to him that vanquished and tottering France still maintained a proud mien and kept a firm grasp of her broken sword. "Never," he wrote on the 5th of December 1870, "has despair come near to my soul."

When Gambetta entered Tours, he found that new troops were already in process of formation in the north, the west and the east of France; in the Middle Loire district, a XVth Army corps, under Général de la Motterouge was already at an advanced stage

of formation; by November it had attained a strength of 60,000 men. The revival of the idea of the *levée en masse* was as little approved by the bulk of the population as it had been before. The *deuxième ban* were not called to the colours. The *premier ban* had already furnished 580,000 men. Eleven large camps were to be formed for the purpose of assembling and training these masses. Since the departments were ordered to furnish, for every 100,000 inhabitants, one battery complete with men, horses and equipment, there was no lack of guns; since, moreover, the traffic by sea remained open, and the public credit of the rich country stood firm, the fighting forces of France, which on the 1st of October numbered about 550,000 men, could be increased before February, irrespective of casualties, by about 400,000 men. At the end of the war France still had 950,000 men under arms. The greatest difficulty which had to be overcome was the finding of officers for the numerous new formations. In order to supply this want, Gambetta introduced the "promotion according to merit," as a result of which non-commissioned officers, privates and even non-soldiers, could be promoted to officers' rank. Apart from a few individuals of conspicuous

ability, who as a result of this measure attained high positions in the army, it was out of the question that such officers could infuse into the new troops that firmness of which they stood in so great need. Napoleon himself was only able to use his newly formed army in the field in 1813, because he had at his disposal tolerably good and sufficient officers' cadres.

The French General Staff [1] declared, moreover, in regard to Gambetta's officers: "These improvised officers were not lacking in good-will or courage, but the history of the second stage of the war furnishes unfortunately only too frequent testimony to their general inexperience and the inadequacy of their training for the military profession, while at the same time it reveals how very little respect they enjoyed with the men and how slight was their influence over their subordinates."

The masses which France put into the field in the second period of the war were greatly superior in number to the Germans. They were able to prolong the duration of the war, but not to alter the fate of the country, for, wherever they engaged, those deficiencies which characterise all militia

[1] *Revue d'histoire,* Part CIV., p. 327.

troops, prevented them from reaping any decisive results. None the less, this huge national levy, as a result of modern weapons, had an importance quite out of comparison with what it would have possessed at an earlier date. On the other hand, the value of Germany's trained troops was rendered so much the more conspicuous. In order to form a just estimate of their achievements in this second stage of the war, one has to bear in mind the extraordinary weakness of the units. The three corps of the second army of Prince Frederick Charles, when they reached the Loire after the fall of Metz, numbered no more than 15,000 infantry each, that is to say, approximately the war strength of a division. It was only the fact that the artillery was at its full strength which to some extent made up for this disadvantage. About the same time, the end of November, the four divisions under the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh numbered no more than 35,000 infantry in all. On the other hand, the opposing French army at the Loire numbered more than 200,000 men.

Although they were invested by no more than 150,000 German troops and were supported by a powerful siege artillery, the

400,000 armed defenders of Paris proved incapable of breaking the siege. Finally the ill-fated offensive of Bourbaki's army in the south-east of France revealed the utter inadequacy of militia armies. General von Werder, with his 43,000 men, succeeded in eluding the attack of Bourbaki with his 135,000 men, which had been intended to take him by surprise, and Bourbaki was unable to vanquish Werder at the Lisaine. The retreat sealed the fate of the ill-starred army, exposed as it was to the inclemencies of the winter season in difficult mountainous country and most scantily furnished with provisions. Pursued by Werder, and threatened by Manteuffel on the left flank and in the rear, it renounced all attempts at further resistance and took refuge on the other side of the Swiss frontier as the only way of escape. "The French eastern army was not properly conquered at the Lisaine. Its attack had merely been repelled, and the losses were in fact comparatively small. And none the less there occurred this complete and indescribable collapse when the news arrived that General von Manteuffel, with an army considerably inferior in numbers, was threatening the rear. The only possible explanation is to be found in

the fact that the army was in the nature of a militia." [1]

In the German Reichstag, on the 16th of February 1874, Field-Marshal Count Moltke expressed his opinion of the armies of the French Republic in the War of 1870–71 in the following terms: "Gentlemen, we have all been able to convince ourselves from experience that even the most numerous collection of brave and worthy and patriotic men is none the less incapable of maintaining a resistance to a genuine army. The French mobile and national guards prolonged the duration of the war by several months, they increased its cost in human blood, and they caused great misery and devastation; but they could not alter the course of the war; they could not procure better peace terms for France. Finally, the excesses of the *franc-tireurs* did not delay our operations for a single day; though they eventually endued our conduct of the war with a harshness which we regret, but which we could not avoid."

[1] Oberst v. Zimmermann, *Milizheere. Vierteljahrshefte für Truppenführung und Heereskunde, X Jahrgang 1913. 4 Heft.*

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of an essay written on the occasion of the Army Bill of 1893, retired Major Count Otto Moltke [1] writes : " In the impressive words of a famous German writer, ' It is only at their birth that great ideas are free from alloy.' Even the strong, inspiring thought of Scharnhorst—that the devotion of the whole energy of a people for the purpose of securing its national existence and national *Kultur* is neither too great nor too dear a sacrifice—has partaken of this fate." As we have already shown, there was danger more than once, even in Prussia-Germany, that this thought would be altogether forgotten. This was the case just before the World-War, and it was in fact the World-War which revealed that, in view of the central position of Germany,

[1] "*Einst, jetzt, was dann ? Beleuchtung der Militärvorlage.*" Berlin, 1893. E. S. Mittler und Sohn, Königl. Hofbuchhandlung.

it was only by straining the defensive force of the nation to the utmost limits that our existence could be made secure.

In the case of Prussia, it might have been expected that this fact would be generally recognised after the War of Liberation; and although it is not altogether surprising that it was not fully grasped in the states of the former Rhenish Confederation, none the less, in the War of Liberation, all Germany was fighting under the black and white standard. The general war-weariness and the efforts of the "Holy Alliance" (although the latter was, in fact, in marked antagonism to democratic tendencies) presented favourable soil for attacks against the standing armies as well as against the system of universal service embodied in a standing army like that of Prussia. It was overlooked that, in point of fact, this animus was being directed against something which no longer existed, namely, against the old type of professional army, such as existed in the eighteenth century.

Those proposals made by German democrats in the first half of the nineteenth century, reminding us as they do of the measures adopted but soon found to be unpractical in the Russian Revolution of

1917, reappear in the fiery speeches of the Frankfort Parliament. If we compare the world of ideas which is here revealed with the reality, as it was exhibited in the achievements of the German national army in 1870–71 and in the World-War, we see very clearly which method of organising the armed force of the nation is best adapted to the conditions of international life as it exists at the present day. Just as in the year 1917 a wave of democracy passed over the world, the ideas of the French Revolution continued for a long while to exert an influence in Germany. The theories of the devotees of a militia were based on the superficial aspect of the question, on the conditions under which the armies of the Republic had fought; they did not penetrate below the surface; they entirely ignored the teachings of the great Napoleonic wars. In the essay we have quoted concerning the Army Bill of 1893, it is averred with justice that, in the German nation "there exist, side by side, a continual striving towards the highest ideals of existence and an extraordinary distaste for the most pressing necessities of this life." Doctrinaire tendencies are always dangerous, and nowhere so much so as with us, as was illustrated in

the passionate opposition to standing armies exhibited in Germany at that time.

It was overlooked that a great State, however much it may be in favour of settling disputes by arbitration and desisting from the display of armed force, none the less, for the sake of its credit and for the purpose of maintaining order at home, cannot entirely dispense with a permanently ready armed force. Even the most extreme pacifist and advocate of a super-state organisation will not desire to dispense with this element of national security. Hence disarmament on a large scale would unquestionably bring about a reversion to the hired professional army. That there is a dark side to the latter is at once evident if we study the history of France between 1815 and 1870. In vain did patriotic Frenchmen at that time draw attention to the advantages of universal military service, as it existed in Prussia. The high moral value which attaches to the personal fulfilment of the military obligation remained unappreciated. It was overlooked in France at that time that it was, in fact, an army essentially of the nature of a mercenary troop which jeopardised both the internal freedom of the State and its security from perils from without, and " was driven

to seek an outlet for an insatiate military ambition." [1] General Trochu was in the minority when he expressed the following opinion: [2] "An army which completely renews itself periodically by absorbing each year a considerable proportion of the best population of the country, and which in return restores to the country annually a contingent of well-trained soldiers, contributes from decade to decade to the mass of the nation a million good citizens, and is a valuable instrument for the education of the people."

The champions of a militia organisation have always urged in behalf of their views that the introduction of such a system would result in a considerable economy. Now in Switzerland we see an example of an exceedingly well-organised militia, but none the less the cost of it is by no means inconsiderable, and it has yet to be proved that, in the case of a large State, the cost would not be far greater than that of a "Rahmenheer" (skeleton army) like the German. Above all, the case of Switzerland cannot be taken as a criterion, because, in the case of a

[1] Treitschke, *Der Bonapartismus. Preuss. Jahrbücher.* (20 *Band.*)

[2] Jähns, *Das französische Heer.*

great power resorting to a militia army, the expenses resulting from the high cost of the technical equipment indispensable at the present day would be quadrupled in proportion to the war-strength of the army.

In the Swiss schools for recruits, the term of training for the mass of the army, that is to say, the infantry, is sixty-five days, with annual repetition courses lasting eleven days, as long as the men belong to the regular army ("Auszug"), *i. e.* from twenty to thirty-two years of age. The liability for service in the Landwehr continues up to forty and for service in the Landsturm up to forty-eight years of age, but without obligation for service in time of peace. The organisation of the Swiss armed force gave proof of its efficiency both in 1871 and recently in the World-War, but it did not win unreserved approbation throughout the country. Moreover the troops which were called up were only employed for the defence of the frontier and the safeguarding of Swiss neutrality; they had no opportunity of showing what they could do in actual warfare. The whole armed force of Switzerland is really only cut out for the armed defence of neutrality and for the defence of the mountainous country. The existing organ-

isation is in harmony with the character of the population. Quite apart from the fact that the political considerations in its case are of an entirely different character, a great power will, in case of war, only abandon the better mode of defence, which consists in preserving the initiative and in attack, at great cost to itself. A militia army of a million men with so short a term of service as that of the Swiss army will, as we know from the experience of all wars, possess neither the requisite firmness nor flexibility to be able to meet successfully the demands of a war of movement. The greater the mass the greater the firmness required. Its officers will lack the experience for this purpose, an experience which can only be gained in continuous professional service; its General Staff will lack training experience of leadership. A large militia army may in time of peace acquire the outward appearance of a trained army, but it will not acquire that self-confident co-operation of all the various units which war demands and which can only be acquired as the result of long training.

Even Switzerland cannot dispense with professional officers. The officers of the General Staff and the officers in charge of

the instruction of the army are soldiers by profession. The militia army of a great state would need a considerably larger number of such officers, but these officers would not be able to improve their experience satisfactorily, because for a large part of the year they would not be in command of any troops. They could never be the transmitters of such a warlike spirit and a sound tradition as exists in the German army. They would lack that faculty for forming a decision which is cultivated in our army and which can only be acquired as the result of long practice. Only by means of strong peace cadres is it possible to preserve that warlike spirit with which the militia army too must be inspired when it is a question of defending the Fatherland, especially if it can only oppose an entrenched resistance.

The historical facts which we have cited bear witness without exception against militia-armies. None the less it might be conceived that these facts had been presented with a military bias and prejudice, if a term of service such as existed in the German army before the war is considered necessary. The World-War should, above all, be an incentive to us to submit all questions to a sober and searching examination. In the

period of reform which followed the Peace of Tilsit, many things were done away with which had until then been regarded as rightful and necessary characteristics of the Prussian army. At that time, however, after a severe defeat, it was a question of getting rid of everything that had shown itself to be out-of-date and unequal to requirements, while the German army of to-day has accomplished the greatest military achievement in history. Yet criticism should not stop short even in the face of this supreme achievement, for the times change and they bring changed conditions. The two-years' term of service was introduced in Prussia for the infantry, then abandoned in favour of the three-years' term of service, and then, in 1893, once more introduced. At that time Count Otto Moltke wrote [1]: "Perhaps it has been above all the most honest and well-informed opponents of the two-years' term of service who have declared that it would be the ruin of the army. . . . On behalf of this view they cited the unimpeachable authority of our heroic Emperor, William I, and of those heroes of Duppel, Königgrätz and Sedan, old in years but young in energy—Roon and Moltke. . . .

[1] *loc. cit.*, p. 22.

It is, however, always dangerous and unreasonable to make the past the final arbiter of the present, however sublime that past may have been, nay, perhaps, the more unreasonable according as that past has been the more sublime. The testimony of one who is dead, as it concerns burning questions of the day and the needs of the living, can only be admitted as decisive in respect to their ethical, but not in respect to their material aspect." Is it possible, therefore, that what has here been said in respect to the two-years' term of service, is applicable also to a further reduction of the term of service?

The answer to this is, that it is here a question not of the judgment of the dead, not of a past state of things, but of the events and experiences of the most recent blood-stained past, and that there must be an ultimate minimum term of service below which one can only go at the expense of thoroughness and of renouncing the attempt to maintain well-disciplined troops. The World-War has, above all, proved that it is now far more important than ever before to encourage the development of a war-like individuality, but this requires a certain length of time. And here, where it is not

a case of an opinion the validity of which is subject to the changes of the times, but of a universal truth, we may rely on Moltke's authority, when he says:[1] "It is not a question merely of the technical, I might almost say, mechanical training of the soldier—that we might, if necessary, accomplish in the period of twenty weeks, which has been here proposed for the training courses of the reserves; by this means we might furnish a supply of men who could be profitably inserted in the firm framework of the army, but who could never form the kernel of the army. But it is a question of far more than this; it is a question of the training and strengthening of moral qualities; it is a question of the military training of the youth to manhood. That cannot be accomplished by mere drilling; it is the fruit of experience and habit."

Physical culture may be helpful as a preparation for the army, but since it is not directed towards any genuinely military aim, it cannot take the place of service in the ranks. The soldier cannot be transformed between to-day and to-morrow into a fighting man capable of resisting the nerve-shattering experiences of the present conflict.

[1] Speech in the Reichstag, March 1st, 1880.

Moreover, in the case of all troops, quite apart from the special troops and the aviation troops, modern technology demands so much special training that, on this account alone, any reduction of the present term of service would be seriously detrimental.

What is needed throughout the army is to build up an enduring structure which shall stand firm in the hour of danger. Nothing in the world is perfect, and hence not everything in our army is perfect. Therefore we must aim at effecting individual improvements, and we must never let ourselves imagine that what is good to-day will also be good for all eternity; but the foundations of our army organisation must be left untouched, "mindful of the old truth that a state will persist by virtue of the same qualities which helped to shape its growth." [1] Careful training has been the source of strength of the German army. Without it even the magnificent spirit revealed by our people in 1914 would not have been able to reap those unexampled successes, the full magnificence of which will only be revealed when it is made known to the world in the face of what odds they were achieved and

[1] Treitschke, *Politics* ("Politik"), I.

at the cost of what mental strain upon both leaders and men.

To the generation which lived in the period following the Wars of Liberation, the words of Treitschke are applicable: "Public opinion of whole generations has been completely in error about the most important political questions." The world-embracing theories of that time, however, did not constitute any immediate danger. Europe had just struck to earth, by her united forces, the tyrant who had kept her in thraldom It was permissible then to dally with thoughts of a militia. At the present day, in view of Germany's central position and of the mighty world-political interests which she has at stake, it is not permissible. Only too clearly has it been revealed that our safety in the future can only be guaranteed by a firmly-knit, trained national army, not by a loose militia.

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